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THE
HISTORY OF FRANCE

From
The Conquest of Gaul by the Romans
TO THE PEACE OF 1856.

BY

A. B. EDWARDS,

Author of "A Summary of English History," &c.

LONDON,
G. ROUTLEDGE & CO., FARRINGDON STREET.
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HISTORY OF FRANCE:
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BY AMELIA B. EDWARDS,
AUTHOR OF "HAND AND GLOVE," "MY BROTHER'S WIFE," "THE LADDER OF LIFE,"
"A SUMMARY OF ENGLISH HISTORY," ETC.

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Proud of the permission which allows me to add her
name to my pages, and prouder still of the
privilege which enables me to call her
my friend,

I Dedicate this Little Book,
with all admiration and affection,
to
MATILDA M. HAYS.

PREFACE.

A WORK so brief as the present is not often found to require an introduction; but, in this instance, the task of authorship has been accompanied by so many disadvantages that I am tempted to entreat a momentary hearing. Expressly limited by the publisher in the all-important item of space, I found myself pledged to compress within the narrow limits of six sheets an amount of matter that might well have occupied three or four octavo volumes. It will be seen at a glance that no work can be in every respect improved by treatment so rapid. The historian who is pressed for time perforsc renounces much that is merely entertaining. He may seldom venture into the fascinating regions of anecdote, and he must never suffer his wandering inclinations to follow the fairy foot-steps of Romance. On the other hand he has to steer clear of the opposite evils of condensation, and avoid lapsing into a meagre chronology of events. I have endeavoured to fulfil these conditions; but with what success it is not for me to determine. The main object is, at all events, gained. A history with which our English students and general readers are too little acquainted, is offered to them in a volume so small that its contents may be acquired in a single evening; and I think I may venture to hope that not even the most impatient will refuse to travel with me in three hours through four-and-twenty centuries of time. If, then, this little book of facts should prove to be a friend as well as an authority—should be found truthful, readable, and concise—should lead one reflecting mind to follow in a wider field the rise and progress of a nation so nearly related to us in geographical position, so interwoven with the triumphs and disasters of our own chronicles, so incorporated with our commercial interests, and so lately allied with us in a just and generous cause—then, indeed, the hope by which I have been animated while writing it will be more than fulfilled.

AMELIA B. EDWARDS.

THE
HISTORY OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE ROMAN CONQUEST TO THE EXTINCTION OF THE MEROVINGIAN AND CARLOVINGIAN DYNASTIES.

(B.C. 124—A.D. 987.)

THE early history of that delightful territory known to the ancients as Gallia, or the country of the Gauls, is so obscurely narrated, and is derived, moreover, from sources so remote, as to prefer but little claim upon our time or our credulity. Bounded by the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the ocean, it was, by reason of its situation, subject to perpetual invasions, and colonized by various peoples. The Iberians, the Phocians, the Cimbri, and the Belga, successively overran the land, established themselves in certain districts, founded cities, and introduced religions. These, in their turn, emigrated when the resources of the country were no longer equal to their support; carried fire and sword beyond the Alps, and poured into Germany, North Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor. Thus Gallia received and rendered back her population, and colonized Europe. About one hundred and twenty-four years before Christ, having recruited their forces at the termination of the Punic wars, the Romans made a descent upon that coast which lies between the Alps and the Rhone; founded a settlement at Aix; took possession of the district as a Latin province, and gave to it the name of Provence. It was not, however, till fifty years before Christ, that Julius Cæsar brought the rest of the country under the Roman yoke

and established military government. From this time may be dated the civilization of Gaul. With the encouragement of agriculture, the distribution of justice, and the leisure of peace, not only the national mind, but the soil itself, became enriched and ameliorated. The vine and olive were brought thither and naturalized; the ancient Celtic tongue, refined by an admixture of the Latin, was moulded into the Romanesque dialect; bridges, aqueducts, amphitheatres, and cities were erected; and the consolations of Christianity were bestowed by the conquerors in return for rights ceded to them by the conquered. Thus two centuries elapsed, and dependence brought prosperity to Gaul. In the year 260, certain barbarian tribes of Germany ventured to harass the Rhenish frontier, but were repulsed and driven homeward by the Roman legions. The most formidable among these invaders were the Franks, a people noted for their love of liberty and ambition of conquest. So long, however, as the strength of Rome continued undiminished, her provinces received ample and ready protection. But that great empire approached its decline, and, falling, proved the destruction of countless tributaries. Exhausted by repeated levies of men and money, Gaul sank, towards the commencement of the fifth century, into so wretched a condition, that, when the warrior-nations who had long threatened her boundaries, united together in one overwhelming league and spread like a destructive torrent throughout the length and breadth of the land, nothing remained for her inhabitants but a feeble defence, flight, captivity, and submision. This invasion took place A.D. 406; and henceforth, for seventy years, the Vandals, the Huns, the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, the Franks, the Alans, and fifteen or twenty other tribes, continued to struggle for possession of the country. In 476, when order was in some degree restored, the district of Armorica had alone escaped with freedom. The Burgundians then established themselves in the east—the Visigoths took possession of a district lying between the Loire and the Pyrenees—a colony of Saxons settled in Lower Normandy—the Vandals passed on into

Spain—and the Franks, under the rule of Pharamond and Merovée, made themselves masters of a large territory that extended from Gallia Belgica to the river Somme, and had for its capital the city of Treves.

Fabulous as are the chronicles of this period, it is, however, certain that the Franks, albeit the least civilized of the usurpers, became in time a powerful race; extended their conquests to the banks of the Loire; and were governed, somewhere about the year 485, by a Christian king named Clovis, who was the grandson of Merovée, and principal founder of the French monarchy.

It must be confessed that Christianity produced no beneficial effect upon these wild converts. On the contrary, it appeared only to increase the ferocity of their dispositions; and Clovis, who received from his clergy the title of Most Christian King, has left a reputation stained by every crime. It was during the reign of this monarch that the Court removed to Paris. Clovis died in the year 511, after having secured to the Franks all that district which lies between the Rhine, the Rhone, the ocean, and the Pyrenees. The city of Paris, destined afterwards to become the most elegant of modern capitals, was at this time confined to the narrow limits of the Isle de la Cité, and consisted of some few churches and hovels surrounded by a fortification. A palace was situated beyond the walls, on the south bank of the river; the abbeys of St. Geneviève, St. Germain L'Auxerrois, St. Germain-des-Prés, and others, were scattered about the vicinity; and the grounds in the neighbourhood of the river, having been partially cleared of their primeval forests, were planted with vineyards and fig-trees.

The successors of Clovis, called the Merovingian kings, continued to rule over the Franks for nearly two centuries and a half. The history of this interval is, perhaps, the most painful upon record. License, barbarity, and crime, were the title-deeds by which each monarch held his crown. The ties of blood and the claims of military honour were alike disregarded; and civil discord impoverished alike the people and

the country. To add to the intricacy of these old chronicles, the kingdom was frequently shared, according to the Frankish laws of inheritance, between all the sons of a former sovereign ; so that two, three, and sometimes four kings were reigning, disputing, and fighting together. Repeated assassinations, and that imbecility which is the consequence of a degeneracy in morals and manners, reduced the race of Clovis to a weak line of princes, who took no part in the actual government of the kingdom, but pass like a procession of puppets across the stage of history. From this time the substance of authority was vested in the hands of the Mayors of the Palace, officers who held the rank of chief judge and steward of the household, and whose dignity was second only to that of the sovereign. Bestowed sometimes by the aristocracy and sometimes by the king, this mayoralty at last became hereditary in the family of Pepin d'Heristhal, who stood in much the same relation to the later Merovingians as did the Earl of Warwick to Henry of Lancaster, and Edward, Earl of March ; or as Dupleix, when governor of Pondicherry, to Mirzapha Jung and Chunda Sahib. He placed six princes successively upon the throne, reserving to himself every power and privilege of royalty, and suffering the nominal monarchs to be seen only once in every year, at the great annual meeting of Frank nobility, called the *mallum*, or *Champ de Mars*. Prisoners at all other times, they were exhibited with great pomp on these occasions, and repaired to the assembly clothed in regal robes, crowned, and drawn by oxen. These kings are called in history the *rois fainéants* ; and sometimes, from the flowing hair which the descendants of Clovis were alone permitted to wear, the *rois chevelures*. Pepin d'Heristhal died in 714, after having reigned for more than twenty-seven years over country and kings. He was succeeded in his office by his son Charles Martel, a man of great energy and courage, who kept the Franks engaged in frequent warfare, and gallantly expelled the Saracens from Aquitaine in the year 732. Thierry IV., last of the Merovingian *fainéants*, died in 737, and Charles, who would not in his own person

assume the crown, deemed it no longer necessary to nominate a successor. He left the kingdom, at his death, to his sons, Pepin le Bref and Carloman, who reigned conjointly.

From the accession, in 768, of Charlemagne, eldest son of Pepin le Bref, may be dated the establishment of clerical power, the rise of chivalry, and the foundation of learning in the Empire of France. He was a man of extraordinary foresight and strength of character, and possessed not only the valour of a hero and the skill of a general, but the calm wisdom of a statesman, and the qualities of a judicious sovereign. Ambitious of conquest as Alexander or Darius, he nevertheless provided as conscientiously for the welfare of his subjects and the advancement of letters, as did Alfred the Great of England about a century afterwards. He founded schools and libraries—convoked national assemblies—revised laws—superintended the administration of justice—encouraged scientific men and professors of the fine arts—and, during a reign of forty-six years, extended his frontiers beyond the Danube, imposed tribute upon the barbarians of the Vistula, made his name a terror to the Saracen tribes, and added Northern Italy to the dependencies of France. Notwithstanding these successes, it appears that the conquest and conversion of the Saxons (a nation of German idolaters, whose territories bordered closely upon his chosen capital of Aix-la-Chapelle) formed the darling enterprise of this powerful monarch. From 770 to 804, his arms were constantly directed against them; and in Wittikind, their heroic leader, he encountered a warrior as fearless, if not as fortunate, as himself. The brave Saxons were, however, no match for one whose triumphs procured him the splendid title of Emperor of the West, and who gathered his daring hosts from dominions which comprised the whole of France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Bohemia, Poland, and Prussia, and were only bounded on the east by the Carpathian mountains, and on the west by the Ebro and the ocean. Year after year he wasted their country with fire and sword, overthrew their idols, levelled their temples to the ground, erected fortresses

amid the ruins of their villages, and carried away vast numbers of captives to the interior of Gaul. To this forced emigration succeeded a conversion equally unwelcome. Thousands of reluctant Saxons were compelled to subscribe to the ceremony of baptism; their principalities were portioned off among abbots and bishops; and Wittikind did homage to Charlemagne in the Champ-de-Mars.

It was about this period that the Danes and Normans first began to harass the northern coasts of Europe. Confident of their naval strength, they attacked the possessions of Charlemagne with as little hesitation as those of his less formidable neighbour, Egbert of Wessex; descended upon Friesland as boldly as upon Teignmouth or Hengesdown; and even ventured with their galleys into the port of a city of Narbonnese Gaul at a time when the emperor himself was sojourning within its walls. Springing up, as they did, towards the close of so prosperous a reign, these new invaders proved more dangerous than Charlemagne had anticipated. He caused war-barks to be stationed at the mouths of his great rivers, and in 808 marched an army to the defence of Friesland. On this occasion, however, he was glad to make terms of peace; and it is said that the increasing power of the Baltic tribes embittered his later days with presentiments of that decay which shortly afterwards befel his gigantic empire. From the conclusion of this peace to the date of his death in the year 814, no event of any historical importance occurred; and the great emperor was buried at Aix-la-Chapelle, in that famous cathedral of which he was the founder.

The race of Carlovingian kings took their name, and only their name, from this their magnificent ancestor. Weak of purpose as the descendants of Clovis, and endued, perhaps, with even a less share of animal courage, they suffered their mighty inheritance to be wrested from them, divided, subdivided, pillaged, and impoverished. No portion of French history is so disastrous, so unsatisfactory, and so obscure as that which relates to this epoch. Indeed, towards the commencement of the tenth century, an utter blank occurs, and

we are left for many years without any records whatever. The civil wars which were obstinately carried on by the grandchildren of Charlemagne led, however, to important changes in the state of the community at large—changes which demand some passing observation.

As in all countries where slavery prevails, the Gallic serfs were forbidden the use of weapons, and the army consisted of freemen only. Under Charlemagne the soldiers were well-paid, well-fed, and well-disciplined. Under his successors their strength was wasted in the petty wars of the nobles and the contentions of the royal family. At the battle of Fontenay alone (841), a hundred thousand of the bravest and most intelligent of the male population are said to have perished. In this position of affairs, therefore, the Church and the nobles held real possession of the kingdom—the population consisted chiefly of slaves—the freemen and soldiers were thinned, dispersed, and dispirited—and the sovereign was a cypher, claiming neither authority nor respect. The barbaric nations which, even in the age of Charlemagne, had threatened the frontiers, were not slow to take advantage of this season of weakness and decay. The Saracens and Gascons on the south, the Britons on the west, and the Scandinavian warriors on the northward shores, spread terror and destruction before them. Rebellions broke out in Italy, Germany, and the Pyrenees. The great empire of the West was dismembered, and shared between three separate claimants; and, to add to the general desolation of the land, a plague of wolves descended from the mountains, and a famine more fatal than even the carnage of the battle-field decimated the unhappy population. Driven by necessity to act upon the defensive, the nobles then instructed their serfs in the use of arms, and fortified their dwellings. Commerce was broken up, cities were abandoned, and, gathering around them their followers and dependents, the barons retired to their domains and established themselves in chieftaincies which were petty sovereignties in all but the name.

And now the Normans became more terrible than ever.

Finding that unless they attacked these isolated fortresses they met with no resistance, they landed in vast hordes, plundered and massacred without mercy, and freighted their galleys with treasure. As they sailed up the Thames, and burnt the cities of Canterbury and London, so they sailed up the Seine, sacked Paris, and left in ashes Rouen, Bordeaux, and Nantes. In the year 911, when Charles the Simple wore the shadow of a crown, Rollo, a famous Norman leader, besieged Chartres and Paris, and penetrated even to the far-off province of Burgundy. It was long since a King of France had possessed either courage or soldiers, and Charles, whose *soubriquet* furnishes the index to his character, was, perhaps, feebler than the feeblest of his predecessors. While Robert, Count of Paris, a warlike and ambitious noble, was gallantly attacking the invaders near Chartres, the King was sending an archbishop to treat with Rollo in his camp and offer him no less a bribe than the entire province of Normandy. Rollo accepted the proposition, swore allegiance to the sovereign, received the title of duke, was elected a peer of France, and received in marriage the hand of the Princess Gisele. Injudicious as this concession might have been, the result proved singularly fortunate. Rollo became a faithful vassal of the crown, and defended his coasts so actively as in time to stem the current of barbaric invasion.

But a new, an unexpected, and a still more formidable enemy now made his appearance. The Counts of Paris had long held the most independent place among the aristocracy of France. They had distinguished themselves by their valour when military skill was almost forgotten, and by their policy when the arts of government were unknown. One of their blood had even been raised to a temporary sovereignty during the minority of Charles the Simple, in return for his gallant defence of the city of Paris, at a period of blockade. At length Hugh the Great, Count of Paris and Orleans, and son of that Robert who had opposed the army of Rollo the Norman, rose up in open rebellion; gave the crown first to his brother-in-law, Rodolph of Burgundy; then to Louis IV.,

surnamed *d'Outremer*; and died A.D. 956, after having governed for many years with all the power of legitimate sovereignty.

It was by this time evident that the race of Charlemagne was drawing to a close. Lothaire, and then Louis the Fainéant, succeeded to Louis *d'Outremer*; and weakness, indolence, and cowardice tarnished the lustre of that imperial name which had been the terror of the nations two hundred and thirty-six years before. One brave and sagacious man there was, however, to whom the Franks turned instinctively for protection. This man was Hugh Capet, son to Hugh the Great. In the year 987, when the Fainéant died at Compiègne, the nobles assembled at Noyon, formally excluded the Duke of Lorraine from the succession, and placed the crown upon the head of the first of the Capets.

Thus ended the Merovingian and Carlovingian dynasties.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF HUGH CAPET TO THE DEATH OF LOUIS THE LION.

(A.D. 987—1226.)

KNOWING, as we do, the past magnificence and the present power of the crown of France, it is with difficulty that we can bring our minds to form a just estimate of that position to which Hugh Capet had raised himself in the year 987.

Feudalism, with its attendant evils and benefits, had now taken root, and in proportion as the dignity of the aristocracy increased, that of royalty diminished. The condition of the sovereign differed in no essential points from that of his seigneurs. He wore a crown. He was anointed from the sacred phial of Rheims. He presided at the judgment-court when a peer was brought to trial. He was attended with certain ceremonies, and enjoyed certain honorary prerogatives. This was all. The actual territories of France, properly so called, comprised only a part of that district which lies between the Loire

and the Somme, and were exceeded in magnitude by those of many powerful feudatories. Bounded on the north by Flanders; on the east by Burgundy and Champagne; on the south by Aquitaine, Poitou, Auvergne, and the Limousin; on the west by Normandy and Brittany, it will be seen that his possessions did not cover a much larger space than is occupied upon the map by the island of Corsica. The history of this time is not, therefore, so much a biography of the monarch as a chronicle of the deeds of his nobles. They were nominally his vassals—but they were in reality his equals. Dukes and counts *de jure*, they were kings *de facto*. The land was studded with their fortresses. They levied troops. They administered justice. They coined money. Their serfs were abject slaves, holding their very lives upon the slender tenure of their liege's pleasure.¹ Independent of the sovereign, absolute in their domains, ambitious, despotic, and constantly warring one against the other, these haughty lords entrenched themselves amid the rights of feudalism, and even numbered among the members of their confederation abbots who loved the camp better than the cloister, and bishops who wore the helm and cuirass with a better grace than the surplice and the stole.

It is not surprising, under these circumstances, that the newly-elected line of sovereigns should have exercised at first but little influence upon their age. Raised by their fellow nobles, they might have been as readily deposed; and it is owing to this caution on their part that the history of France, from the accession of Hugh Capet to that of St. Louis (a period of two hundred and forty years), presents so few heroic or important details. Pious, politic, and industrious, the first king of the line of Capet sought rather to consolidate his authority than to encroach upon the rights of his neighbours. He had to defend his crown against the claims of the Duke of Lorraine, and in the summer of the year 988, laid siege to the city of Laon. Failing in this attempt, he withdrew his forces, possessed himself by stratagem of the person of his enemy, and imprisoned him for life in a tower at Orleans, where he

died A.D. 993. The restlessness and ambition of the great barons led at this time to innumerable petty wars, in which the king took no part. He died October 24th, 996, after a reign of nearly ten years; and, having taken the precaution of crowning his son during his own lifetime, was succeeded by that prince without opposition from the nobles.

Singularly gentle, benevolent, and single-hearted, Robert I., second sovereign of the house of Capet, governed his people more like a pastor than a king; alleviated their sufferings with a charity that knew no economy either of money or personal toil; and set forth in every action of his life a most touching example of absolute faith and perfect patience. About the year 995, he married Bertha, widow of the Earl of Blois, to whom he had been attached for many years, and with whom he now lived in the enjoyment of that domestic felicity for which his disposition was peculiarly fitted. This happiness was destined, however, to be of brief duration. Relying chiefly for temporal power upon her authority in cases of illegal marriages and disputed successions, the Church of Rome was at this time especially rigorous in the enforcement of her ecclesiastical laws—above all, in the enforcement of those laws which related to the intermarriages of families. Armed with the tremendous power of excommunication, the pope thus checked the increasing influence of the aristocracy, and constituted himself the judge and ruler of princes.

Now it happened, unfortunately, that Robert and Bertha were distantly related, and Pope Gregory V. resolved to part them. That their alliance was one not of policy but of affection—that they tenderly loved each other—that they had loved each other for long years—was all of no moment to the jealous pontiff. He commanded them to separate; King Robert refused obedience; and sentence of excommunication was pronounced. At length, after a struggle of four or five years (during which they were abandoned by their courtiers and servants, and treated as if they were lepers whom it was dangerous to approach), this sorrowful young couple were forced to submit. A divorce was obtained; Bertha retired to

a convent; and Robert married Constance of Toulouse, an imperious and bigoted woman, who set his authority at defiance, and made him one of the most unhappy of men. To administer alms, to erect churches, to undertake pilgrimages, to compose chants and psalms, and to lead with his own voice the choir of St. Denis, constituted henceforth the only pleasures of Robert the Pious. He died A.D. 1031, after a reign of thirty-five years, and was bitterly regretted by the nation whose burthens he had lightened and whose devotion he had won. Under this sovereign the duchy of Burgundy was added to the fiefs of France.

The claim of Henry I., heir and successor to Robert the Pious, was disputed by Constance, his step-mother, who allied herself against him with the Count of Champagne, and sought to place her youngest son upon the throne. Daunted by the hostility of so influential a noble, Henry fled into Normandy with some of his young companions, imploring protection and help from Duke Robert, surnamed the Magnificent. Both were promptly granted. The great vassal marched to Paris at the head of his army, compelled Constance to seek the shelter of a convent, and secured the Frankish crown to its rightful inheritor. In return for these services, Henry ceded the territory of the Vexin to his ally; and, commencing his reign by an act of clemency, pardoned his rebellious brother, and granted him, in fief, the duchy of Burgundy. As if for the express purpose of placing himself beyond the power of the Roman pontiff, Henry married Anne, daughter of Jarolas, Grand Duke of Russia. Christians of little more than a century's standing, the Muscovite people were at this time almost in a state of barbarism, and scarcely known, even by name, to the western nations. The alliance, however, proved to be happy and judicious, and Anne, at her death, was numbered among the saints of the French calendar. With the exception of some unavailing wars in which he tried, without effect, to recover the Vexin district from the Dukes of Normandy, no further events of any moment are recorded during the reign of Henry I. Like his predecessors, he reigned

quietly and insignificantly, and seems almost to have been forgotten by the historians of his time. He died, A.D. 1060, after having worn the crown for twenty-nine years.

Being only seven years of age at the death of his father, Philip I. succeeded to the throne under the guardianship of Baldwin V., Count of Flanders, and did not assume the reins of government till the decease of that nobleman in 1067. It was during his minority that the conquest of Britain was effected, A.D. 1066, by William of Normandy, son to Duke Robert the Magnificent. This event, although it belongs more properly to the history of England, exercised a very considerable influence upon the politics of France. A great vassal was established in a kingdom far wealthier and more extensive than that of his suzerain; the interests of a rival country were incorporated with those of a French province; and the protection of the Channel was withdrawn, as it were, from the shores of France. The Count of Flanders, whose regency was in all other respects particularly honourable and judicious, has been severely censured for the apathy with which he regarded this expedition. It should, however, be remembered that the resources of France were at that time exceedingly limited—that the royal dominions covered a space of little more than one hundred square miles—and that the valour of the Norman knights and the splendour of their exploits had not only distinguished them in Italy, Apulia, and Sicily, but had assembled round their standard all the adventurous spirits of Europe. It cannot reasonably be supposed that, under these circumstances, a contest with Duke William would have resulted in anything but defeat. This great conquest of England, combined with the prevalent enthusiasm of religion and chivalry, led to another event still more remarkable—an event which, although it did not immediately affect the interests of Philip I., yet influenced in an important manner the policy of that sovereign, and was succeeded by many others in which the fortunes of all Europe were concerned.

A pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre had long been deemed the most pious and perilous of undertakings. There was no

deed of daring which brought so much honour. There was no act of penance which conferred so many spiritual advantages. But the price at which they were purchased was one which even the bravest might well hesitate to pay. Imprisonment, insult, or death, was all that the pilgrim had to expect at the hands of the Oriental, and the frequent repetition of these outrages excited every Christian country to indignation. At this juncture arose Peter the Hermit, a monk of Amiens, preaching vengeance, and calling on the nations to arm, and rescue the birthplace of the Saviour. The summons came at a moment when the pious were most anxious to display their zeal, and the adventurous their valour. The words flew from mouth to mouth, the enthusiasm spread from city to city, with astonishing rapidity. An armament consisting of 300,000 men, assembled under the command of Robert of Normandy, Raymond of Toulouse, and Godfrey of Bouillon, left France in the autumn of 1096; marched through Constantinople into the Holy Land; took Nice and Antioch; and planted the standard of the Cross on the walls of Jerusalem, July 20, 1099. Another expedition was fitted out in 1101, and met with severe losses. The two, collectively, are known in history as the First Crusade.

In this vast enterprise King Philip of France took no part. Occupied by obscure quarrels with Pope Urban II.—sunk in apathy and debauchery—careless even of the invasion which brought William the Conqueror to Normandy at the head of his soldiers, and was abruptly terminated by the death of that monarch in 1087—he left the cares of government and the conduct of the army to his son Louis le Gros, whom he had associated with him upon the throne; and died, A.D. 1108, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, and the fiftieth of his reign.

The most accomplished knight in his kingdom, and the first sovereign of France who entertained a settled system of policy, Louis VI. succeeded in establishing his authority more firmly than any of his predecessors. The first four Capets had been the followers of events. Louis le Gros controlled events to serve his purposes. The first four had been overawed, and

their subjects oppressed, by the rapacious barons whose castles lay round about the neighbourhood of Paris. To check the power of these barons became the chief aim of the new sovereign. He attacked the castles of Puiset and Montmorenci, reduced the lords of Couci to obedience, and possessed himself of the formidable Tour de Montlhéry. By these measures the great public roads were rendered comparatively safe—the towns were guarded from pillage—commerce received the protection of the crown—and, in proportion as the privileges of the nobles were circumscribed, those of the middle class became enlarged and consolidated.

From Louis VI. the citizens first obtained those charters without which civil liberty can have no existence. They formed themselves into communes, elected magistrates, and organized militia; and in return for advantages so important, supplied the royal treasury with money. These innovations were strenuously combated by the aristocracy, and prolonged for several years the strife between the king and his vassals. All was, however, in vain; and the opposition of the nobles served only to strengthen the cause of the people. The municipal bodies grew in wealth and influence; arts and trades began to flourish; waste lands were reclaimed; and, in course of time, the immunities enjoyed by the townsman were extended to the peasant. Insignificant as appear to be the local wars of this period, when compared with the conquest of England and the siege of Jerusalem, it will be seen that they were, notwithstanding, of great moment to the state, and productive of the most beneficial results.

Henry I. of England had now wrested Normandy from his brother Robert, whom he detained in perpetual captivity; and the son of Robert fled for safety to the Court of France. Pursuant to that love of justice which seemed to influence every action of his life, Louis embraced the cause of the fugitive, assembled his nobles, and was defeated by the English upon the plains of Brenneville, A.D. 1119. He then called upon the clergy and townpeople for assistance, and, finding himself once more at the head of a large body of troops,

revenged his losses by devastating Normandy. Peace was, however, concluded by the intervention of Pope Calixtus II.; the duchy was ceded in fief to Henry; and Prince William of England did homage for the same to the King of France. In 1124, the war was renewed, and, this time, the Emperor of Germany allied his forces with those of the English sovereign. A great invasion of France was concerted. Louis repaired to the Abbey of St. Denis, unfurled the oriflamme, and summoned all the feudatories of the crown to his assistance. No less than 200,000 soldiers obeyed this solemn convocation; but scarcely had they met when the emperor expired, and thenceforward no more was heard of the invasion. Louis le Gros died in 1137, leaving behind him the reputation of a just, a brave, and a politic sovereign. He was sincerely lamented by his people; he was feared by his enemies; he had advanced the cause of freedom and civilization fully two centuries during a reign of twenty-nine years, and had made the name of France respected in districts where none of her monarchs had been seen since the days of the Carlovingians.

Louis VII., surnamed the Young, married Eleanor, daughter to the Duke of Aquitaine, and succeeded, by right of his wife's dowry, to dominions which, in extent and revenue, more than doubled those of his father and predecessor. Descended, on his mother's side, from the race of Charlemagne, this prince inherited somewhat of that weakness of purpose and deficiency of judgment which gave to his remote ancestors the unenviable title of *les rois fainéants*. He possessed, however, the warlike temperament of Louis le Gros, and commenced his reign by besieging the city of Toulouse, upon which Eleanor had a claim. The enterprise proved, indeed, to be unsuccessful, but it served to make his power respected in the south, and blinded his subjects for a time to the imperfections of his character.

Louis had been reigning in France for nearly ten years, when news arrived from Palestine which once more spread the spirit of vengeance throughout the nations. The Christian city of Edessa had been taken by the Saracens, and all her

inhabitants put to the sword. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, preached a new crusade. A meeting was held at Vezelay. The people clamoured for the sacred insignia; and so great was the demand that the king and the abbot were obliged at last to cut up their cloaks for crosses, and fasten them upon the sleeves of the future crusaders. On the eve of the feast of Pentecost, 1147, Louis received the oriflamme before the altar of St. Denis, and departed next day for the Holy Land, accompanied by Eleanor his queen and an army one hundred thousand strong. Conrad, Emperor of Germany, had already preceded him with an equally large body of men, and both followed the old route through Constantinople. Utter destruction fell upon the German hosts. They were betrayed by Greek guides, and cut to pieces in the defiles of Lycaonia; while those of Louis, by a fatal error of one of his captains, were hemmed in among the mountains of Laodicea and mercilessly slaughtered. With the miserable remnant of this hapless host every future enterprise went wrong. The soldiers perished by the roadside, were worn out by fatigue and hunger, were hunted by the Turks, and abandoned by their leaders. The king and his nobles, on the other hand, having taken ship at Satalia for Antioch, arrived safely and ignominiously at Jerusalem, said their prayers at the holy sepulchre, and returned to Europe in October, 1149, without one of the brave soldiers who had marched away with them two years before. The popularity of the king was now utterly gone. His people reproached him. His wife reproached him. He reproached himself. Eleanor demanded and obtained a divorce, A.D. 1152, and shortly afterwards married Henry II. of England, to whom she transferred that splendid dowry which had previously formed more than half of the dominions of France. From this time forth there was enmity between the monarchs. Henry endeavoured to establish those claims upon Toulouse which Louis had advanced in 1142. Louis allied himself with the Toulousans, and defeated the plans of his rival. The same thing happened in Auvergne, and with the same result. Thomas à Becket was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral, and

Louis took part with the English clergy in their persecution of the king. Finally, with a baseness for which history can furnish no apology, he encouraged the sons of his rival to those acts of rebellion which ultimately broke the heart of the first warrior of that age. In the year 1179, Louis made a pilgrimage to Canterbury, in the hope that his prayers, if offered at the shrine of à Becket, might obtain the recovery of his son Philip Augustus, then lying ill of a dangerous fever. The prince was restored to health; but Louis, on his return, was struck with an attack of palsy, and, after lingering painfully for several months, expired, September 18th, 1180, and was buried in the monastery of Barbeau, on the Seine.

Politic as Machiavelli, aspiring as Charles V. of Spain, and valiant as his friend and contemporary Richard Cœur de Lion, Philip Augustus ascended the throne at fifteen years of age with the determination of extending his fame and his territories, of reducing the power of his nobles, and of securing to himself such a degree of absolute sovereignty as had not been known in France since the reign of Charlemagne. Never were designs more ambitiously conceived, more patiently pursued, or, after long years of calculation, more triumphantly executed. Philip Augustus lived to see his state more honoured than that of any other European monarch—to wrest the Gallic provinces from the English crown—and to influence with the terror of his name all those districts that lay between the Scheldt and the Mediterranean, the Rhine and the ocean.

The first ten years of this reign were occupied by civil wars, by contests with Flanders, and by a frightful persecution of the Jews, who were plundered without mercy and expelled from the kingdom. The next great event was the preaching of the third crusade. Guy de Lusignan was now King of Jerusalem, and Saladin, surnamed the great, reigned over the Saracens in Egypt and Syria. The battle of Tiberias was fought, A.D. 1187, and Saladin became master not only of Jerusalem but of its sovereign. Once again the call to arms spread through Europe. All past losses were forgotten; and Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, Richard of England,

and Philip Augustus each assumed the cross. Barbarossa was drowned in crossing the river Selef, near Seleucia; but the others led their armies into Palestine, A.D. 1190, found the barons of Syria engaged in the siege of Acre, and, by their arrival, hastened the surrender of the town. A marked coolness had long succeeded to the warm friendship professed by Philip and Richard some ten or twelve years before, and now the coolness gave place to positive enmity. Philip was jealous of the brilliant exploits performed by his fellow-king. Richard was offended by the feudal superiority affected by his suzerain of France. At last Philip resolved to abandon an enterprise which could bring him but a secondary fame, and, pleading ill-health, drew off the greater part of his forces and returned to France in the year 1192. Here he remained an unwilling observer of Richard's popularity, till the captivity of that hero in Austria gave him, in the course of the following year, an opportunity of gratifying both his envy and his hatred. He allied himself with John of England, invaded Normandy, and besieged, but was repulsed by, Rouen. Suddenly Richard obtained his liberty, and from that time to the day of his death there was fighting between England and France. With the exception of a battle near Vendôme in 1194, when Philip was defeated with the loss of all his money and baggage, no engagements of any note signalled this war; which was terminated by the death of the Lion-hearted in 1199.

It was now Philip's policy to shake off his former ally, and find some pretext for keeping up the war. He, therefore, supported the cause of Arthur of Brittany, nephew to John, and, when that unfortunate prince fell into the power of his uncle, took the opportunity of turning his arms upon Normandy. He had long coveted this fair and fertile duchy, which, before the invasion of Rollo, had formed part of the ancient inheritance of France; and he left untried no means by which his designs might be accomplished. Rouen surrendered in 1204, and John, ever base and cowardly, resigned his Norman territories without a struggle. In this year a fourth

crusade was preached, and Constantinople was taken by the army.

But while these events were going on in Normandy and Turkey in Europe, others of minor historical import, but far deeper interest, were drawing the attention, the sympathies, and the hatred of all men towards the province of Langue-doc. These districts washed by the blue waters of the Mediterranean, blushing with southern fruits, enjoying the tranquil blessings of a well-organized consular government, and surpassing their northern neighbours in all the arts of peace and luxuries of commerce, dared, in the seclusion of their elegant retirement, to satirize in their literature and to reprove in their churches the follies, the immoralities, and the inconsistencies of the age. Numbering among their troubadours moralists as witty and profound as Geoffrey Chaucer, and among their clergy reformers as sincere and uncompromising as John Wycliffe, they formed themselves into a sect known as the Albigenses; abjured many of the favourite dogmas of the Roman Catholic faith; denied the supremacy of the holy See; and set in their own persons an example of that moral purity and single-hearted devotion which had long since ceased to characterise the followers of the Church of Rome. Pope Innocent III. now wore the triple crown. He was a man of violent passions and imperious temper. This defection enraged him. He resolved to exterminate if he could not reclaim the dissenters; and sent his Legate accordingly to intimidate Raymond, Count of Toulouse, chief lord of that province. The legate conducted his mission with insolence. He commanded the count to extirpate the new heresy with fire and sword, and, finding him resolute, not only excommunicated him in the name of the pope, but insulted him before his Court. An unfortunate circumstance, similar to that which caused the murder of à Becket and the humiliation of Henry II., hereupon took place. Count Raymond uttered some words of unpremeditated anger, and the legate was stabbed in a hostelry on the Rhone, by a gentleman of the Toulousan retinue. Innocent gave way to transports of

fury. He again excommunicated the brave nobleman and his nephew, Raymond Roger, Viscount of Beziers. He preached a crusade against the peaceful people of the south. He issued interdicts against all who might offer them assistance. He promised to their slayers spoils and honours in this life, and salvation in the next. He leagued against them the strongest passions and desires of the human heart, and by the spring of 1209, had assembled a formidable army composed of all those who were eager for gain, for bloodshed, or for absolution. Delivered up to this ruthless multitude, ruin fell upon Languedoc and its inhabitants. Crusade after crusade was preached, and army after army laid waste her cities and vineyards. The Viscount of Beziers was treacherously murdered; his castles and villages were levelled with the ground; his knights and dependants were slaughtered with frightful cruelty. At Minerba one hundred and fifty were burnt alive. At the taking of Beziers twenty thousand were put to the sword. In a battle between Raymond and the Crusaders seventeen thousand were slain. At last the sword, the stake, and the scaffold accomplished their work. The commerce of Languedoc was destroyed—the people were nearly exterminated—the beautiful Provençal language fell into disuse—the cities were laid in ruin—and the power of the Inquisition was established. Thus the Albigenses were conquered, and the persecution was brought to a close in the year 1217.

Philip Augustus stood aloof, a quiet observer of the war, and sought, with his habitual sagacity, to turn the confusion to his own advantage. He extended his authority—established the first permanent taxes—founded schools and colleges—enlarged, paved, and embellished the city of Paris—built the old palace of the Louvre—constructed an aqueduct for the supply of water within the walls, and improved the discipline of the army and the condition of the private soldier. In the battle of Bouvines, A.D. 1214, when Otho, Emperor of Germany, defended the Flemings against the invading French, the wisdom of these reforms was gloriously attested. The militia bodies rivalled the knights in their exploits—five

counts were taken—Otho was put to flight—and Philip, by his personal intrepidity and military skill, won for himself and his dynasty the respect and admiration of Europe.

Having now acquired, through his marriage with Isabella of Hainault, the province of Artois—taken Picardy and Auvergne from their reigning counts—wrested Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou from King John of England; and obtained, as head of the feudal system, a degree of influence little short of sovereignty in Languedoc—this active, prudent, and powerful monarch expired, after a brilliant reign of forty-three years, on the 18th of September, A.D. 1223.

Louis VIII., mockingly surnamed the Lion, was feeble both in mind and person, inherited some of the valour but none of the wisdom of his illustrious father, and reigned but three years in France. The only notable event of his brief rule was the preaching of a new crusade against the Albigenses in 1226. This was the last expedition undertaken against that unfortunate district. The army, commanded by the king in person, met everywhere with a submission that deprecated violence. The cities threw open their gates. The people laid down their arms. The town of Avignon alone defied the monarch, dared the terrors of a siege, and kept the French army for three months at bay beneath its walls. A prey to famine, to disease, and to the assaults of this brave garrison, the army of Louis triumphed at last after a loss of twenty thousand men, and retired towards the close of the year, stricken with fever, and suffering more severely for its victory than the Avignonais for their capitulation. Attacked by the fatal epidemic then raging among his troops, Louis VIII. expired at Montpensier in the month of November, 1226, leaving his widow with five young children, the eldest of which succeeded him upon the throne. Of this monarch it has been said by an old writer, that “he was neither to be noted for vices, nor commended for virtues; and his greatest fame consisted in that he was son to an excellent father, and father to an excellent son.”

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF SAINT LOUIS TO THAT OF THE RACE OF
VALOIS.

(A.D. 1226—1325.)

It will be seen, when briefly pausing to review the state of France at this period, that Louis IX., on his accession to the throne, received a kingdom identical only in name with that which owned the sway of Hugh Capet and Robert the Pious. Two hundred and forty years had elapsed since the foundation of the monarchy by the first of the Capets. The position of the sovereign was no longer the same. The condition of society had undergone important changes. The beautiful inheritance of the crown, from being a petty state powerless in the scale of politics, and scarcely exceeding in size the island of Corsica, had risen into a considerable monarchy, gallant in warfare, mighty amid the councils of the kings, and embracing a territory more extensive than the isle of Ireland or the kingdom of Portugal. The development of the feudal system had vested an unforeseen authority in the hands of the sovereign. The race of courtiers had sprung up from amid a body of nobles who, not many years back, esteemed themselves, in all but a feudal point of view, the equals of royalty itself. A general tendency towards refinement of manners and social courtesy had gone on strengthening with the progress of civilization and the increase of knowledge. Chivalry, with its ardent valour, its religious enthusiasm, and its devotion to woman, had tinctured this rude age with the fascinating hues of romance. The soldier was taught to combine mercy with courage. The person of the ecclesiastic was made sacred from violence. The wandering poets sang of love and courage. The old romances of Charlemagne and his Paladins, and Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, were read with passionate eagerness. Courts of love and trials of wit were established by the ladies, for the decision of nice points in etiquette, difficult cases of precedence, questions of poetical

merit, and discussions on the laws of courtship. Every youth of high birth was educated in the practices of chivalry, in the service of the gentler sex, and in music, poetry, dancing, and other accomplishments. This training, however, seldom included the more clerical acquirements of reading or writing. Tournaments, also, became popular; were presided over by kings and ladies, and served to display the skill as well as the magnificence of the knights. Not only the cultivation of courtly observances and the progress of poetry, but even the crusades had communicated a beneficial impulse to society. Countries far distant were visited—the knowledge of geography was extended—improvements were effected in navigation and the military art—the luxuries of the east were imported—maritime commerce met with a degree of encouragement previously unknown—and, while the aristocracy indulged in habits of expense, industry and enterprize received a valuable stimulus. Trade flourished. Talent and invention found a ready market. The merchants, grown wealthy and influential, ventured upon speculations of foreign commerce. The towns were enlarged, and the streets filled with shops and warehouses. Even the condition of the wretched serfs, who still remained in a state of vassalage, was sensibly ameliorated, and clauses for the protection of the lower classes were inserted among the laws. Thus it happened that none of his predecessors had ever succeeded to the throne at a time of such prosperity and power as Louis IX., or reaped from their ancestors such advantages as he inherited from the conquests and policy of his grandfather, Philip Augustus.

Louis, known as Saint Louis, was but eleven years of age at the death of his father, and the turbulent nobles were not slow to seize upon an opportunity which seemed to promise the restoration of their former greatness. Their efforts at revolt, however, proved unavailing when opposed to the firm and judicious regency of the queen-mother, Blanche of Castile. She called to her aid the militia of Paris—subdued the malcontents—enforced the obedience of the Dukes of Brittany

and Burgundy—and, by the treaty of Paris, signed in 1229, secured to the crown of France a large portion of the forfeited estates of Count Raymond of Toulouse.

At nineteen years of age, Louis married Marguerite of Provence, and at twenty-one assumed the reins of government. He continued, however, to pay the utmost deference to the political experience of his mother, who for some years assisted him in the cares of royalty. Single-hearted, dutiful, and reared with almost monkish discipline, the young king remained uncorrupted in his principles, unwavering in his devotion, and unchanged in every filial sentiment throughout the whole of his after life. We read of no man who endured suffering with more fortitude, or prosperity with more humility. He was gentle and forgiving, firm and brave. He carried his conscientious principles to an almost unwise extent, and every action of his life was governed by the strictest integrity. It is to be regretted that the superstitious tendencies of the age in which he lived should have induced so good a king to neglect France for Palestine, and to engage in undertakings against the infidels, which proved not only fatal to himself, but ruinous to his country.

Falling seriously ill at Pontoise, A.D. 1244, he vowed to take the cross and lead a new crusade, if Heaven but spared his life. He recovered, and no persuasions could induce him to receive absolution of his vow. He concluded a peace with Henry III. of England; formed alliances with neighbouring princes; appointed his mother to a second regency; and in the year 1248 departed for the Holy Land, taking with him his queen, Marguerite of Provence, and his three brothers, the Counts of Artois, Provence, and Anjou. After sojourning for a year at Nicosia, the capital of the Isle of Cyprus, the king and his army set sail for Egypt; landed in sight of Damietta; leaped, sword in hand, into the sea, and took possession of the town. Instead of pushing on immediately for Cairo, they were detained five months at Damietta, in consequence of the annual overflowing of the Nile. As soon, however, as the waters had abated, Louis and his soldiers pursued

their march, leaving Damietta strongly fortified, and consigning the queen and her ladies to the care of the garrison. Arrived at Mansourah, a town up the Nile, they found themselves entangled amid a wilderness of canals; exposed to a burning climate; harassed by the Saracens on all sides; and assailed by discharges of Greek fire—an inflammable substance which water would not extinguish; which was propelled in barrels through the air, by means of a machine called a petardie; and which the eastern nations alone possessed the secret of making. The Count of Artois was defeated and killed in an assault upon the town; a thousand knights were slain; and the project of advancing upon Cairo was abandoned. To add to the sufferings of the army, a pestilence broke out in the camp, and the king himself, falling sick of the disorder, had, to use the language of an old chronicle, "nothing but courage to maintain life." The retreat was begun immediately after Easter; but in the course of a few days, the king and his soldiers were all prisoners. The sick were murdered and cast into the river. The healthy were laden with chains, and placed in close confinement. A treaty was then concluded, in which it was arranged that Louis and his forces should be restored to liberty, on condition of the payment of four hundred thousand pounds of silver, and the evacuation of the town of Damietta. A truce of ten years was likewise agreed upon, and the Count of Poitiers remained as hostage for his brother. After leaving Mansourah, the king proceeded to Palestine, where he was joined by Marguerite. During the space of four years, he next visited and fortified Acre, Sidon, and Jaffa, and redeemed twelve thousand Christians from slavery. At length, having received intelligence of the death of his mother, he returned to France, and landed at Marseilles, July 2, 1254.

Louis IX. had now been absent for more than six years, and was received by his people with the liveliest demonstrations of welcome. It was observed, however, that a profound melancholy had taken possession of his mind. He was inconsolable for the loss of his mother, and the defeat of his expe-

dition. He employed himself actively in matters of state—devoted his time and thoughts to public affairs—shrank from all gaiety—refused to listen to music or conversation—and still bore upon his sleeve the emblem of the cross. This symbol denoted his intention of again visiting the east, and filled his subjects with apprehensions and regret. He now maintained great state and magnificence in his Court, but in his own person discarded all the pomps and splendours of royalty. He revoked taxes; instituted a code of justice; established counsellors versed in the pandects of Justinian, and introduced lawyers into parliament. Appeals were encouraged. The lower orders were protected by the sovereign against baron and priest. Bodies of police were attached to all the cities, and restitution was made in cases where the royal property had been unjustly augmented. Nor was this all. Sitting, as was his “custom always of the afternoon,” under a shady oak which may still be seen in the Forest of Vincennes, this excellent monarch would admit his people to audience, listen to the story of their simple wants, and himself redress their grievances to the utmost of his power.

The crown of Naples had at this time fallen into the hands of the Ghibellines, and Urban IV., being anxious to dispossess that faction of so great a power, offered the kingdom to Charles, Count of Anjou. Charles was ambitious and unscrupulous. He collected an army, defeated the Sicilians in a great battle at Beneventum, A.D. 1266, and took possession of his ill-acquired dominions. Naturally cruel and rapacious, the conqueror began his reign with acts of such severity that the Sicilians hold his name to this day in utter detestation. In 1267, Prince Conradin, of Suabia, with some others of the German princes, invaded Naples, and again the victory was with Charles of Anjou, who, if he had before this been hated by the people of Sicily, now drew upon himself the indignation of all Europe. Conradin was taken prisoner, and Charles, careless of the laws of warfare and chivalry, caused him to be beheaded on the scaffold like a common traitor. So began the French conquests in Italy. Conquests which,

having commenced brilliantly, ended miserably—were lost and won, and lost and won, over and over again—were productive only of loss and disappointment to the kingdom of France, and yet continued to be for long centuries the object of ambition to her restless sovereigns.

Louis had, in the meantime, married his eldest son, Philip, to Isabella of Arragon, and received from her father possession of several towns in the south of France. He had also extended his dominions by the purchase of Champaigne; and, influenced by a scruple fatal to the interests of his country, had restored to Henry III. of England those rich domains of Guienne won by his father, King Louis VIII. In return for these concessions, Henry resigned all claim to Normandy and Anjou.

And now, having made restitutions, improvements, and civil laws, the king's desires began to wander back again to the Holy Land. To no purpose did his nobles, his relatives, and his people entreat him to leave them no more. Not even the pope could influence him in his decision. Palestine had been invaded by the Soldan of Egypt—Cesarea had been taken—Antioch had fallen into the hands of the unbeliever, and upwards of one hundred thousand Christians had been enslaved, or put to the sword. A new crusade was preached; and, under these circumstances, neither age nor debility could prevent Saint Louis from fulfilling that vow which had so long been registered by the Cross upon his garments. In the month of July, 1270, the king embarked at Aigues-Mortes, accompanied by his three sons and a considerable army. Arrived at Tunis, they anchored off the shore of Carthage, took that ancient town and castle, and were there besieged by the Moors. In a few weeks it became evident that the troops were suffering severely from the unfriendly nature of the soil, the heat of the sun, and the dryness of the atmosphere. Then the plague broke out amongst them, and the camp proved more fatal than the battle-field. The Count de Nevers, second son of St. Louis, caught the infection, and died; and the king himself next fell ill. For twenty-two days this great

and good man lay upon the threshold of the grave, enduring with patience, submitting himself to the will of Heaven, and, by his advice and example, sustaining the courage of those around him. Finding his last moments approach, he caused himself to be lifted from his bed and laid upon ashes. He then crossed his arms upon his breast, closed his eyes as if in sleep, murmured to himself the name of Jerusalem, and so died. At this moment, the fleet of Charles of Anjou came into port. Alarmed at the silence that pervaded the camp, he sounded his trumpets, mounted a horse, and galloped to the royal pavilion, when the first object that met his eyes was the body of his brother extended upon the ashes. This melancholy event took place on the 25th of August, 1270. The king was in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and the forty-fourth of his reign, and was succeeded by his first-born, Philip, surnamed the Hardy.

Philip III., being himself incapacitated by sickness, now left the conduct of the war to his uncle, Charles of Anjou, who still persisted, from interested motives, in continuing this hopeless siege. At length, after three more months of suffering and assault, a treaty of peace was concluded, and the king journeyed home to France accompanied by five coffins, containing the remains of his father, brother, brother-in-law, wife, and son. Philip was young to be afflicted with sorrows so heavy. About twenty-five years of age, just, liberal and pious, he in many points resembled his father. He was, however, credulous and weak-minded; and the French ascribe their prosperity during this reign less to the acquirements of his head than to the goodness of his heart.

An ancient rivalry, which had long subsisted between the royal houses of France and Arragon, was now brought to the issue of war. A number of Sicilian exiles, with John of Procida at their head, escaped from the tyranny of Charles of Anjou, and sought refuge with Pedro of Arragon. This monarch promised them support, and John, who had been dispossessed of his estates by the French King of Naples, made his way to Sicily in the disguise of a monk, and prepared his

countrymen for a terrible vengeance. On the 30th of March, 1282, just as the vesper-bell was ringing, the inhabitants of Palermo rose *en masse*, and, falling sword in hand upon their unsuspecting victims, left not a Frenchman alive in the city.* The same scene was re-enacted in every part of the island; and it is said that, on the whole, no less than eight thousand of the oppressors were massacred. This fearful slaughter is known in history as the Sicilian Vespers. Peter of Arragon then landed upon the island with a powerful army, was proclaimed king in place of Charles of Anjou, and extended his conquests as far as Calabria. The loss of his Sicilian dominions, and the destruction of his fleet by the Arragonese admiral, compelled Charles to solicit aid from his nephew of France, Philip the Hardy; who accordingly assembled an immense army, entered Spain, and took Gerona. Want of provisions, fever, and the repeated attacks of the half-savage infantry of Catalonia, decimated the French troops, and at length compelled them to retreat. Sick, defeated, and broken-hearted, King Philip, attended by the remnant of his brave soldiers, was borne back in a litter to his dominions, and expired at Perpignan, in October, 1285. Charles of Anjou had preceded him to the grave not long before; and Pedro of Arragon expired within the same year.

Philip IV., surnamed the Fair, succeeded to the crown at seventeen years of age. He was the handsomest man of his day; and such had been the progress of the monarchical spirit in France, that none of his nobles attempted to take advantage of his youth by adding to their own independence. It is probable that, had they done so, they would have met with little success; for Philip was brave, haughty, and unscrupulous, and entertained, moreover, an exaggerated idea of the kingly prerogative. Like Philip Augustus, he was overbearing and rapacious, and throughout his career loved fraud better than fair-dealing, and falsehood better than truth.

King Philip began his reign by an unpardonable act of

* It is said that one exception was made in favour of Guillaume de Pourcelets, a gentleman of Provence, who was spared on account of his extraordinary probity.

treachery. Edward I. of England had been his friend and ally upon his first accession, and of the successes of Edward in Scotland and Wales he became ungovernably envious. Unable to find any better pretext on which to found a quarrel, he complained of the idle rivalry carried on by the sailors of the two nations, and cited the English sovereign to appear before the Parliament of Paris at the very moment when that monarch was preparing for an invasion of Scotland. Edward resented this proceeding, renounced his homage, and allied himself against Philip with Guy de Dampierre, Count of Flanders, whose daughter Philippa was betrothed to the Prince of Wales. In this defensive alliance the French king beheld only the means of success. With a craft for which history furnishes few parallels, he tampered with the conditions of a treaty then in progress between himself and his rival—seized upon the province of Guienne—captured the person of Philippe, and detained her as a hostage—induced Baliol to take up arms, and supported William Wallace in his defence of Scotland against the English forces. Strange as it now appears, these deeds of perfidy were eminently successful. The pope effected a reconciliation between England and France—Philip invaded and took possession of the rich county of Flanders—his daughter, the Princess Isabella, was given in marriage to the Prince of Wales—and each monarch left the other to such aggrandizement of his dominions as he might think proper. Thus Edward consigned Flanders to its fate, Philip withdrew his protection from Scotland, and amity was restored to the shores of the Channel.

And now to treachery abroad was added oppression at home. The king became, not the protector, but the plunderer of his people. He exhausted the resources of taxes and imposts. He levied fines. He debased the coinage to a fifth of its original value. He caused all the Jews in his dominions to be poisoned in one day, and appropriated the whole of their riches. He even dared to seize upon the foreign merchants, exacted from them an enormous ransom, and then sent them into banishment.

To these intolerable burthens the French sullenly submitted;

but the people of Flanders, unused to tyranny, rose in rebellion, massacred every Frenchman in Bruges, and acknowledged as their leader a grandson of Guy de Dampierre. Infuriated by resistance, Philip despatched an army under the command of Robert d'Artois. Upon the plain of Courtrai, close under the walls and towers of the town, the French and Flemings drew up, face to face—fifty thousand knights and soldiers on the one side, twenty thousand weavers and traders on the other. A canal lay between the besiegers and the besieged. The troops charged with blind impetuosity, and the citizens calmly awaited them. In a few moments the victory was decided. Squadron after squadron, the French horsemen came up, were precipitated headlong into one vast grave, and met with instant death from the pikes and mallets of their enemies. After all was over, the Flemings collected on the field four thousand gilt spurs, such as were only worn by knights and nobles, and hung them up as a trophy in the convent-chapel at Groenangen. Shortly after this great defeat, which happened on the 9th of June, 1302, the province of Bordeaux revolted, and as soon as order was restored, Philip marched in person upon Mons-en-Puelle, to revenge the defeat of his knights at Courtrai. He won two great battles over the Flemings, in the year 1304; but that gallant people, driven to desperation, closed up their shops, abandoned their callings, and poured out in vast multitudes to the defence of their liberties. Convinced, at length, that no amount of force would avail against these indomitable citizens, Philip consented to a treaty of peace, fixed the river Lys as the boundary of France, and acknowledged Robert de Bethune, son to Guy de Dampierre, as Count of Flanders.

During all this time a serious dispute had been going on between the king and Pope Boniface VIII., in consequence of a tax which had been levied on the clergy. The pontiff excommunicated the king. The king accused the pontiff of heresy and infidelity. A conspiracy was organized at Agnani, and Boniface, with many indignities, was taken prisoner. Released, however, soon afterwards by his people, he died in

1303, of excitement and passion. Benedict XI. was next elected to the Papal chair. He resolved to revenge the death of his predecessor; and, while preparing to excommunicate all those persons engaged in the former conspiracy, was himself poisoned by the contrivance of the French monarch. A new conclave of cardinals was next convoked, and one Bertrand de Goth, Archbishop of Bordeaux, received the papal crown, under the title of Clement V. The new pope was the creature of the French sovereign, and promised in all things to do the bidding of his patron. The pontifical court was thereupon removed to Avignon, and Philip concerted with his Papal ally to destroy the order of Knights Templars. The wealth and influence of that noble body excited the cupidity and provoked the envy of the jealous king. On the 13th of October, 1307, the Templars were seized in all parts of France; the grand-master, Jacques de Molay, was cast into prison; the treasures of the order were confiscated; the members were accused of frightful crimes; many were put to the torture; and fifty-seven knights were burnt alive in Paris. The grand-master, and three of his chief officers, were left lingering in prison for some years longer, and, being brought to a mock trial in 1314, were burnt before a slow fire, within the precincts of the palace walls. It is said that Jacques de Molay, amid the agonies of death, summoned the king and the pope to answer for their crimes at the throne of God, before the expiration of a year and a day. Ere two months were over, Clement V. had gone to his account; and Philip, having succeeded in annexing the city of Lyons to the kingdom of France, expired at Fontainebleau, November 4th, 1314. Neither had survived the given time.

Philip the Fair was, at the period of his death, the most potent sovereign in Europe. Under him, France had become an absolute monarchy, and the people were bowed beneath an iron yoke. Towards the municipal bodies he extended some degree of favour; and, while he humbled the aristocracy, admitted the deputies of his chief cities to the meetings of the states-general. From these measures, all of which were

suggested by a selfish policy, much after benefit resulted. The third estate, or commons, obtained representation in parliament—serfdom was abolished—the middle classes were permitted to purchase titles of nobility—and judicial process began to take the place of judicial combat, in criminal cases. Philip IV. left three sons, all of whom reigned in rapid succession, leaving no heirs male.

Louis X., surnamed the Peevish, first ascended the throne. He suffered his uncle, Charles of Valois, to take into his own hands the chief power of the state, and himself led a dissipated life amid the young nobles of his court. In the year 1315, he marched an army into Flanders; but, in consequence of the floods which deluged the low countries, was forced to raise the siege of Courtrai, without having struck a single blow. This king died of a severe chill, in the month of June, 1316, having reigned only two years.

Philip V., after some disputes respecting the succession, next assumed the crown. His brother had left one daughter, the Princess Jane; but her right was set aside, and the king, determined not to relinquish his authority, caused the celebrated decree known as the Salic law to be established in France. By this ordinance, females were for ever excluded from the throne. During a brief reign of six years, Philip exerted himself to project some useful reforms, which, however, he did not live to execute. Troops of banditti, known as the *pastoureaux*, at this time infested the country. They robbed and murdered in all directions, and were at last exterminated by the seneschal of Carcassone. We are also told that the crime of poisoning was now common in France. In the year 1321, Philip V. fell into a languid, lingering state, and died at Longchamp, on the 3rd of January, 1322, in the twenty-ninth year of his age.

Charles IV., surnamed the Handsome, succeeded his two elder brothers. He wore the crown for six years, and, during that time, extended his protection to the persecuted Jews. This is all that history has preserved respecting the events of his reign. Finding himself seized by a violent attack of

illness, the king desired the parliament to appoint his successor, and died on the eve of Christmas Day, A.D. 1327.

Of the fine family of Philip the Fair, not one son now remained to fill the throne of France; and the people, naturally influenced by the superstitions of that age, believed that Heaven had imposed this fatality upon the children as a punishment for the sins of the father.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF THE HOUSE OF VALOIS TO THAT OF
LOUIS XI.

(A.D. 1328—1461.)

UPON the peers and commons of France had now devolved the important task of electing a successor to King Charles IV. Their choice fell upon his cousin, the Count of Valois, who, in the thirty-fifth year of his age, was crowned at Rheims, under the title of Philip VI., surnamed *Le Bien Fortuné*. To enforce obedience by terror, admiration by splendour, and respect by the display of personal courage, constituted the policy of this sovereign. He began his reign by executing the late minister of finance; by debasing the coinage; and by establishing so prodigal, so luxurious, and so attractive a court, that not only did the aristocracy crowd thither from their feudal solitudes, but the Kings of Navarre and Bohemia, and the powerful Prince of Dauphiny, abandoned their own territorial palaces to enjoy the superior splendour of their magnificent neighbour. From this epoch may be dated the second age of chivalry in France—an age in every respect inferior to the first. Pomp, ceremonies, and that refinement which is expressed by the language of compliment, had usurped the simple enthusiasm of the first crusaders. To the old and not unworthy hatred of Moor and Turk, had succeeded an unnatural hostility towards the lower classes. As the commons rose in wealth and political influence, the nobles gradually lost their hold of both, and degenerated into the servility of

court followers. The plebeian, conscious of his strength, shook aside the ancient feudal fetters. The noble, jealous of his waning power, regarded the plebeian first with contempt, and then with a deadly animosity. This antagonism of classes, so fatal to the best interests of any kingdom, bore its first evil fruits in the course of the following reign—broke out at intervals throughout all the after-history of the nation—and, reaching its culminating point towards the close of the eighteenth century, convulsed all Europe with the terrors of a gigantic revolution.

It will be remembered by the student of our English annals, that the mother of Edward III. was daughter to Philip the Fair of France. Founding his claim upon that descent, the English monarch now stepped forward to dispute the title of Philip of Valois. A close alliance subsisted at this time between Flanders and Britain, and upon the brave citizens of Ghent and Bruges Edward called for assistance in his great enterprize. Promptly responsive, the Flemings proclaimed Edward King of France, in the year 1336, and the rival sovereigns prepared for war. Philip assembled a fleet, sailed into the Channel, and began hostilities by the destruction of Southampton. Edward, with characteristic impetuosity, crowded a few ships with knights and archers, sailed in pursuit, overtook the French fleet near Sluys, and, gallantly bearing down upon it, achieved a brilliant victory. This engagement put a temporary end to the war, and a truce was concluded in 1342. In the meantime there had been disturbances in Brittany. The Count de Montford had done homage to Edward as King of France; the adherents of Philip took up arms; and the courageous Countess de Montford, left to the defence of Hennebon, withstood a fierce siege, headed a sortie in person, burnt the enemy's camp, and was at last relieved by an English fleet, under the command of Sir Walter Manny. Revengeful of the part taken by the northern provinces, Philip now decoyed a party of Breton knights to one of his tournaments, seized upon their persons and arms, and straightway beheaded them without even the

formality of a trial. This piece of treachery occasioned the immediate renewal of the war. Justly indignant at the betrayal of his allies, Edward sent the Earl of Derby to the attack of Guienne, and himself landed in Normandy with an army of forty thousand men. Meeting with no resistance, he marched almost to the gates of Paris, pillaging, burning, and destroying every town by the way. He retired northwards to Cressy, in the autumn of 1346, and was followed by Philip with an army more imposing for its size than remarkable for its discipline or its valour. Several troops of Genoese and German mercenaries, commanded by their own proud and petty chiefs, swelled with an undisciplined, weak, and disorderly mob the ranks of the French sovereign. They became unmanageable from their very numbers, and, arriving late and weary before the English camp, on the 26th of August, 1346, found the enemy tranquilly awaiting them in order of battle. The day was already far advanced. The English were favourably posted along the slope of a hill, and had been resting for several hours. The French were exhausted by rapid marching. All this was represented to Philip by his captains; but such was his impatience, that he could brook no delay. The Genoese archers were ordered to the attack. They remonstrated with the fiery king. They were faint with hunger and fatigue, and the heavy rain then falling had spoiled the tension of their bowstrings. But Philip, eager for fighting, gave no heed to the sufferings of his soldiers. The command was repeated. They advanced, were repulsed, and falling back upon their former position, were met by the cavalry commanded by the Duke d'Alençon. "Kill the lazy ribalds!" cried that nobleman, furious at the repulse; and the French knights, following his example, drew their swords, massacred their hapless auxiliaries, and charged upon the enemy, over the bodies of the Genoese. This barbarous act of injustice decided the battle before it had well begun. Taking advantage of the confusion, the English poured in a deadly volley of arrows, and then descended upon the broken and struggling ranks of the French army. The van was driven back upon

the main body; darkness came on; thousands were trampled to death by their flying countrymen; and the English had only to kill, to pursue, and to capture. In this memorable action, King Philip was defeated by a body of men numbering, according to Froissart, not more than one-eighth of his own great army. Eleven princes, one hundred knights bannerets, twelve hundred chevaliers, and thirty thousand soldiers were left dead upon the field. The Kings of Bohemia and Majorca were killed; and Philip, twice wounded, and forced away by his attendants, was compelled to seek for safety within the walls of Abbeville. The great glory of this day was chiefly reaped by the Black Prince, who commanded the English forces under the direction of his father.

To the disastrous field of Cressy succeeded a loss still more important to the nation. Edward marched upon Calais, starved out the garrison by a prolonged siege of eleven months; and, on the 29th of August, 1347, entered the city and expelled its inhabitants. It was upon this occasion that six burghers of the town placed themselves voluntarily in the power of the English monarch, and were spared through the intercession of Queen Philippa. Having colonised Calais, Edward now withdrew to his own dominions, and, content with his triumphs, agreed to a truce of ten months. The truce, however, was continued during the few remaining years of this reign. An enemy more terrible than either sovereign had entered the field and mowed the ranks of both. The Black Death, that fearful plague of Florence which is invested with so strange a poetry by the genius of Boccaccio, travelled northwards from the sunny vale of the Arno, swept away a third of the inhabitants of France, and left all Europe in desolation and mourning.

Philip of Valois died in the year 1350, in the 57th year of his age, and was succeeded by his eldest son, John, Duke of Normandy. Notwithstanding the severe losses consequent upon the Anglo-Gallic wars, this monarch had contrived to extend his territories by the purchase of Dauphiny, Roussillon, and Cerdagne; while from his mother, who was a daughter of

the King of Naples, he inherited Maine and Anjou. It was he who first imposed upon the people the odious salt-tax, known as the Gabelle.

John, a brave and chivalrous prince, honourably surnamed the Good, inherited the crown at a period of much turbulence and distress. Devastation everywhere mapped out the foot-steps of the English. The lands lay waste—the ploughs rusted in the furrows—the homesteads were blackened ruins. Even the fair city of Paris looked forlorn, and her people dispirited. Grass grew in the streets, and many quarters were utterly deserted. The juncture was one fraught with peril, and the new sovereign was ill-fitted to meet the exigencies of poverty and disaffection. The first acts of his reign were violent and injudicious. He adulterated the coin, confiscated the credit of the Jewish and Italian traders, and, on a mere suspicion, executed without trial the Constable of Eu, and some other nobles. The kingdom was now in a state of universal discontent, consequent upon the imposition of the Gabelle; and the King of Navarre (who bore a resentment to John for not having bestowed upon him the earldom of Angoulême) exerted himself to foment the popular resistance. Herein he was assisted by the Count of Harcourt, and caused the new Earl d'Angoulême to be assassinated in his bed. Enraged at this audacious crime, yet not daring to summon to punishment so powerful an offender, the French king lay in wait and seized the first opportunity of revenge. In the year 1356, a great dinner was given by the dauphin at his castle of Rouen; and John, learning that the King of Navarre and the Count d'Harcourt were among the guests, entered with a train of armed followers, surprised them at table, and, despite the supplications of the dauphin, who besought his father not to inflict so heavy a dishonour upon his hospitality, arrested and summarily executed Harcourt and three other noblemen, and cast Charles of Navarre into prison. Never was violence more speedily repaid. Philip, father of Charles, and Geoffrey, uncle of Harcourt, immediately went over to Edward of England, acknowledged him King of France, and did homage

to him for their domains. Edward constituted himself avenger of their cause, and sent the Black Prince with one army into the Limousin, while another invaded the duchy of Normandy. John now made a vow to fight the Prince of Wales whenever he could meet him, and convoked his nobles to revenge the battle of Cressy. Sixty thousand strong, this fine army, composed of all the rank and chivalry of France, came in sight of the English on the plains of Poitiers, September 18th, 1356. Finding his retreat intercepted, the Black Prince encamped his forces upon a hill-side surrounded by vineyards, and approached by narrow roads bordered with thick hedges. He had with him only eight thousand men, and offered to surrender upon terms honourable to himself and advantageous to his opponents. John would hear of nothing but unconditional submission. Thus the day passed away in negotiation; and the prince, who saw that a battle would be inevitable upon the morrow, took advantage of the delay to cast up entrenchments, and otherwise strengthen the advantages of his position. The next morning (the 19th), a corps of French knights received orders to clear the road leading to the English camp. Not more than four could ride abreast down this narrow way. Clouds of arrows poured in upon them from behind the trees and hedgerows; and the foot-soldiers, creeping through, stabbed knights and horses with their daggers. A panic seized the troop. The Dauphin's corps was charged in the flank by a body of English cavalry; and, in the moment of confusion and flight, Prince Edward's knights mounted their horses, charged down the road, and routed two out of the three wings into which the French host had been divided. The reserve, or third line, commanded by King John in person, remained firm; and even this body outnumbered the whole army of the Prince of Wales. Still confident of victory, the French sovereign dismounted, battle-axe in hand; and though twice wounded in the face, continued to fight till he and his youngest son were left almost alone with the enemy. He was then obliged to surrender. The Black Prince was at this time only twenty-six years of age, and, by the courtesy

with which he treated his royal captive, proved himself to be as chivalrous as he was brave. John was conducted with great pomp to England, and treated on all occasions with the respect due to a king. Not only was he attended through London with the Prince of Wales riding bareheaded at his side, but he was even served at table, according to the fashion of the age, by that young conqueror, as if they two stood in the relation, not of victor and captive, but father and son.

Charles, the Dauphin, now assumed the regency. A truce was concluded with England. The states-general were convened, and subsidies and troops were demanded for the maintenance of the state. The southern deputies voted both; but the northern made conditions. They required that the ministers should be brought to trial, that the King of Navarre should be set at liberty, and that a committee of knights, prelates, and burgesses, should be retained as council for the Dauphin. These stipulations alarmed the prince. He evaded them, dismissed the states, and again debased the money. An insurrection, headed by Stephen Marcel, Provost of Paris, followed this measure. The Dauphin's evil advisers were slaughtered before his face; he was himself compelled to adopt the revolutionary cap, or *chaperon*, and Marcel became, for the moment, absolute in Paris. Alarmed at this manifestation of power on the part of the commonalty, the nobility met in great numbers, and cried for vengeance. Marcel attacked and took possession of the Louvre; put the city in a state of defence; and proclaimed the King of Navarre captain-general of the burgesses of Paris. The regent assembled seven thousand lances, and gathered beneath his banner all the aristocracy of France. Thus civil war began, and with it a new and still more formidable evil broke out—an evil which had long been impending, and which filled lords and citizens alike with consternation.

For long centuries the condition of the French peasant had been intolerable. His master looked upon him with contempt; held him unworthy to wield an axe in the battle-field; pillaged him as if he had been a Jew; hunted him as if he had

been a wolf; burnt his cabin; carried off his bride or his daughter; starved him out in forest and cavern, if he dared to resist; and when he had won his enfranchisement, forced him back into slavery and denied his civil rights. What marvel, then, if Jacques Bonhomme, as they called him in their scorn, asked himself by what right these things were done? What marvel if, feeling that he had natural affections, natural resentments, and natural duties in common with the rest of mankind, he rose at last, cried to Heaven against the tyrant, and took such vengeance as his barbarous nature prompted? In Beauvoisie it first began. Some three or four serfs, maddened by the tale of their mutual wrongs, agreed that it would be well to exterminate the whole race of nobles. They snatched up their scythes and torches, rushed upon the nearest chateau, murdered all the inmates, and left the building in flames. The instinct of despair and hate spread as if by magic. The rising became universal. The skies were red by night with the light sent up from burning castles. Lords and ladies were massacred, tortured, forced to eat the half-consumed flesh of their parents and children, and sacrificed to a wild fury which had been smouldering ever since the days of the early kings. In this great strait, differences of party, of station, of country were all forgotten. Nobles and citizens united to exterminate the half-naked rebels. Even the English lent their aid, and Froissart tells triumphantly "how the gentlemen of Beauvoisie killed great plenty of Jacques." In a brief space the provinces were restored to tranquillity; but it was a tranquillity of death. The serfs had nearly all perished by fire and sword. The town of Meaux was burnt "with all the villeins that could be shut up in it." Many districts became deserts, and so ended the famous insurrection called the Jacquerie.

In the meantime Marcel, the revolutionary provost of Paris, had been slain in a tumult, and with him fell the whole strength of the party which he had supported. The King of Navarre fled; the city submitted; and on the 24th of August, 1358, the Dauphin once more took possession of the capital.

Weary of his splendid captivity in the palace of the Savoy, King John now offered to cede to Edward the whole of western France and a ransom of 4000 crowns, in exchange for liberty. The treaty was proposed in parliament, and rejected with one voice by the regent and the states-general of 1359. Edward again invaded France with a numerous army, marched through Champagne and Burgundy, encamped at Monthier, and endeavoured to provoke the Dauphin to a battle before the walls of Paris. The prince, however, with a cool wisdom sufficiently rare in those days of inconsiderate valour, kept his knights and himself closely shut up in the city, till Edward, finding his patience and provisions alike exhausted, broke up his camp and proceeded towards Chartres. The famous treaty of Bretigny was at last concluded, A.D. 1360. By this deed all Aquitaine, all the provinces south-west of the Loire, and all the sea-coast from Calais to St. Valery, were given up to the English monarch. Three millions of crowns were to be paid as the ransom of King John; and Edward, on his part, was to relinquish every pretension to the sovereignty of France, and all claim to the Duchy of Normandy. John returned to his devastated country, which was now smitten with a three years' pestilence, infested by parties of disbanded soldiery, and in many districts almost depopulated. The king, despite these national troubles, was on the point of engaging in a new crusade, when he learnt that his son, the Duke of Anjou, who had been left as a hostage in Calais, had escaped to Paris. Deeply hurt at this breach of honour, John returned in person to England, surrendered himself a second time to Edward, and, falling sick of a languishing disorder, died at the Savoy Palace in the Strand, April 8th, 1364.

Charles V., surnamed the Wise, may be said to have reigned in France for eight years before he ascended the throne. Schooled, during the captivity of his father, in the arts of government; familiar with all imaginable adversities; well used to difficulties of finance; and, above all, remarkable for his caution in the field and his foresight in council—this prince, though himself of doubtful courage and feeble constitution, contrived during his reign to re-establish order, to

recover the lost provinces from the English crown, and to restore the prosperity of commerce and the dignity of military success to the kingdom of France. To the sagacity with which he appreciated circumstances and men, the readiness with which he took advantage of every favourable crisis, and the tact with which he chose the bravest, the wisest, and the most deserving for his ministers and captains, may be attributed much of the splendour and all the martial achievements of his reign.

The first act of the new sovereign was hostile to the King of Navarre. Resolved that so intriguing a vassal should no more be suffered to foment popular disturbances, Charles sent an army into Normandy, where some towns acknowledged the suzerainty of Navarre, and gave the command to Bertrand du Guesclin, a valiant knight of Brittany. This Du Guesclin possessed all the qualities of a hero and a general. He was valiant, merciful, generous, loyal, and true. His first battle was a victory; and Charles, learning that the field of Cocherel was won and almost the whole of Normandy brought under his rule, conferred upon the gallant Breton the county of Longueville. The scene of war was then transferred to Brittany. Du Guesclin and Charles of Blois marched against De Montfort, who claimed to be duke of that province. The battle of Avray was fought; Charles of Blois was killed; a reconciliation was effected with Navarre; and De Montford was acknowledged Duke of Bretagne by the King of France. There was peace now between Charles the Wise and all his neighbours; but even peace proved scarcely any relief to the country, overrun as it was by bands of foreign mercenaries for whom there was no longer any occupation. They spread themselves over the kingdom; they committed every excess; they recoiled before no crime. It would have needed a second army to exterminate them. In this emergency, the prudent king resolved to employ them; and Du Guesclin, assembling them once more beneath his banner, led them across the Pyrenees to aid Henry of Castille against the oppressions of his brother, Pedro the Cruel. Passing through Avignon,

these fierce companies exacted a tribute and a benediction from the pope, entered Spain, expelled Pedro, and placed Henry in possession of the crown. Pedro now applied for help to the Black Prince, who, weary of inaction, espoused his cause, marched to his relief, and on the 3rd of April, 1367, encountered and defeated the French army near Najara. On this occasion Du Guesclin was taken prisoner; Pedro the Cruel recovered his dominions; and Henry found an asylum in Languedoc, with the Duke of Anjou. Du Guesclin was ransomed at an enormous price, part of which was paid by the Princess of Wales, and part by the brave Chandos, a general of the Black Prince. Even from this defeat Charles contrived to reap advantages. The English prince, distressed by the expenses of his enterprise, levied a heavy tax upon his province of Aquitaine. His subjects resisted, and appealed to the French monarch for redress. Charles was not warlike; but the Prince of Wales was in bad health; King Edward was advanced in years; and the politic sovereign beheld in this supplication an opening for the recovery of the province. He assembled the states, summoned the Black Prince to answer for his exactions, and, on his refusal to attend, pronounced forfeit of all the French possessions of the English crown. War was declared, A.D. 1370. The prince, borne in a litter at the head of his army, attacked and took Limoges; but, finding himself declining more and more rapidly, returned to England; left the army under the command of his brother, John of Gaunt; and died not long after. From this time the fortunes of the English changed. Constantly harassed by the enemy, never coming to any actual battle, fatigued, half-starved, and weakened by sickness, the army seemed, when deprived of its brilliant leader, to have lost all its past power and prestige. One by one the provinces of Ponthieu, Quercy, Limousin, Rouergue, Saintonge, and Angoumois returned to the sovereignty of France. The English fleet was conquered at Rochelle. The capital of Poitiers revolted. At length only Calais, Bayonne, Bordeaux, and Cherbourg remained of all those splendid victories which had been the glory of the

English arms; and Edward, unable to endure the loss of his greatness and the death of his heroic son, expired in 1377, leaving the sceptre to Richard II., then a child of ten years of age. During these wars, Du Guesclin fell. He died of a fever, while besieging Chateau Randon in 1380, and for a long time none of his officers could be prevailed upon to accept the rank left vacant by his death. Charles erected a superb monument to his memory in the abbey of St. Denis, and a lamp was kept burning before it for many centuries.

Charles the Wise did not long survive his famous general. Being at his castle of Beauté, on the Marne, and finding, by symptoms long foretold, that his last moments were at hand, he assembled round his bed all the chief prelates, barons, and members of his council—addressed them upon various important matters—received the last consolations of the Roman Catholic church—and died on the 26th of September, A.D. 1380. Although the policy of this sovereign had been throughout expressly calculated to control the liberty of the subject and the expression of public opinion, his reign, nevertheless, proved of incalculable benefit to the people and country, and tended, according to the exigencies of that epoch, to promote the solid welfare of the nation. He relieved the pressure of taxation; he respected the value of the coinage; he conciliated the Jews; he restored safety to the public roads; and he rewarded merit, wherever it was to be found. Better educated than any previous monarch, Charles V., encouraged the progress of letters, and, by collecting nine hundred volumes, may be said to have founded the Imperial Library at Paris, which, in the reign of his father, contained but twenty books. He likewise placed restrictions upon the power of the pope, and even issued an ordinance which forbade the parliament to modify or suspend its decrees by virtue of any order sealed with the royal seal.

Charles VI., eldest son and successor of Charles the Wise, was only twelve years of age at the death of his father, and was left to the guardianship of four powerful and ambitious uncles—these were the Dukes of Berri, Burgundy, Bourbon,

and Anjou. The latter rushed into the death-chamber, where the body of the late king yet lay unburied, and commenced his regency by seizing the royal jewels, and plundering the palace. At the coronation these nobles contended for the places of honour. They were perpetually at strife among themselves, and, by oppressing the people, distracted the very commencement of the new reign with insurrections. Paris rose. The collectors of taxes were massacred at the Hôtel de Ville, and the prisons thrown open. Rouen followed the example; and in Languedoc, the wretched inhabitants, driven to madness by the Duke de Berri, fled in hordes to the forests, organized themselves into tribes of banditti, and were for many years the terror of the province. About this time the Duke of Anjou, ever rapacious for gain, inherited from his cousin Jeanne all the Italian rights of the house of Anjou, the kingdom of Naples, and the county of Provence. In these claims he was opposed by Charles Durazzo. The duke then assembled an army, and marched to the conquest of his new domains. But the soil of Italy was ever destined to be fatal to the sons of France. Fatigue, privation, and disease dispersed his soldiers; and, being seized himself with a malady prevalent in his camp, he died miserably in the land which he had hoped to conquer. His son, however, persevered in the assertion of the family claim, and assumed the empty title of Louis II., King of Naples.

In 1382, the Count of Flanders besought the aid of France against his rebellious burghers, now leagued against him under Philip van Arteveldt, son of the famous brewer of that name. The boyish pride of the young king was flattered at the idea of a campaign. An army was raised; the oriflamme unfurled; and Charles, at the head of his troops, marched into Flanders, effected the passage of the Lys, and won a great victory at Rosbecque on the 27th of November, 1382. Hemmed in by the French on all sides, the Flemings had no room to fight. They were driven back upon each other from all quarters. Thousands were stifled to death without receiving a wound. Nine thousand Ghentois alone were counted among the dead;

and Philip van Arteveldt was one of the first to perish. On his return from this campaign, Charles marched to Paris with his army, resolved to punish that rebellious capital. The terrified citizens, perceiving the uselessness of resistance, showed every submission, and the king entered with the sullen bearing of an offended conqueror. He then sent one hundred of the principal inhabitants to the scaffold; confiscated the property of the rich; re-established all the obnoxious taxes, including the *gabelle*; and deprived Paris of its franchise. Rouen, Rheims, and many others of his large cities received the same treatment; the people were left bankrupts; their riches were grasped by the three dukes; and soon the treasury was left empty as before.

Charles at length grew impatient of the power of his uncles, and, in the year 1388, took the administration into his own hands. He now gave some promise of a better government, and showed that he was not in his own person so exacting as when prompted by the counsels of his imperious guardians. He deprived the Duke of Burgundy of his offices, and gave them to his own brother, the Duke of Orleans. He expelled the venial *employés* that filled the public posts, and recalled the faithful servants of Charles V. He revoked unjust ordinances and oppressive taxes, and placed the Constable Du Clisson at the head of the council. Du Clisson was brave, rugged, a friend of the great Du Guesclin, and, like him, a native of Brittany. Surrounded by those enemies which in every court beset a tried and honest man, Du Clisson had none more bitter or more formidable than the Duke of Brittany. One night the Constable was attacked by assassins in the street and left for dead; and De Craon, the perpetrator of the deed, fled for protection to his employer, the Duke of Brittany. Du Clisson recovered; but Charles swore to avenge him, and marched northwards in the month of August, 1391. Impatience, excitement, and the unusual heat of the weather had thrown the king into so feverish a state that his attendants endeavoured to persuade him to a brief delay. He would not listen to them. He appointed the rendezvous

of the troops at Mans; and, being still in a restless and irritable condition of mind, was alarmed by a maniac who rushed out upon him from a wood by the roadside. He fancied himself betrayed, and, seized by a sudden frenzy, drew his sword, slew several of his attendants, and was carried back to the nearest town in a state of raving madness. Some months elapsed before he recovered, and the expedition to Brittany was heard of no more. About two years after this event an accident occurred which confirmed the mental disorder indicated in 1391. There was a masquerade held at the palace, and the king, being disguised as a satyr, wore a garment of flax, which unfortunately took fire. The Duchess de Berri had sufficient presence of mind to envelope him in her mantle, and so saved his life; but four of his companions, wearing the same disguise, were burnt to death upon the spot. A fifth saved his life by plunging into a cistern of water; and so great was the shock, the confusion, and the tumult, not only in the palace but out in the public streets, that a return of the delirium came on, and, with few lucid intervals, Charles VI. continued insane during the remainder of his life.

Henceforth the government of the kingdom devolved upon the Dukes of Orleans and Burgundy. The people became the victims of the strongest; and power was valued only as a means of plunder. From this time the history of France is usurped by the quarrels, the robberies, and the rivalries of these two men. After the death of the Duke of Burgundy in 1403, matters became worse than before; for his son, John the Fearless, proved to be even more ambitious and unprincipled than he. He caused his cousin, the Duke of Orleans, to be assassinated in the streets of Paris; fled to his fortress of Bapaume; assembled an army; and, entering Paris at the head of his forces, compelled the council to acquit him. The party of the Burgundians was now all-powerful. The followers of Orleans called themselves the Armagnacs, in consequence of the marriage of the young duke with a daughter of the Count of Armagnac, a Gascon nobleman, who furnished his son-in-law with a small but fierce army of provincial

soldiers. Between these parties there reigned perpetual strife —a strife which may almost be classed under the head of civil warfare. Each endeavoured to gain possession of the royal person, and to govern in his name. Sometimes the king shook off his malady, sanctioned some few laws, was the tool of whichever faction then prevailed, or strove feebly to overthrow the tyranny of both. But these efforts only added to the confusion, and served to consolidate power that had been unjustly exercised and dishonourably acquired.

It was fortunate for France that during all this period of domestic misery the peace with England had remained unbroken. Richard II. had been too feeble, and Henry IV. too fully occupied with his own troubles, to engage in enterprises abroad; but Henry V., young, warlike, and eager for glory, had now ascended the British throne; and, reviving the almost forgotten claims of England, declared for the crown of France. He proclaimed war; landed at Havre on the 14th of August, 1415; and, with an army of 36,000 men, besieged and took Harfleur. The actual presence of the invader could not reconcile the jealousies and hatreds of the Court. A thousand petty animosities delayed the troops, divided the generals, and weakened the councils of war. Henry marched from Harfleur to Calais without opposition, and did not come in sight of the French till October 24th, 1415, nearly two months after the date of his landing. By this time the English army was greatly reduced in numbers. The heat, the diet, and the fatigue had brought on a mortality in the camp, and of those numbers that remained many were so weak that they could scarcely sit upon their horses. The French, on the contrary, were unwearied, were 50,000 strong, and numbered among their ranks all the knights and nobles of the kingdom. The armies encamped face to face between the villages of Framecourt and Agincourt, and the night of the 24th was passed in preparation. It rained heavily till just before daybreak, and the field, which had been lately sown, was trampled into a deep slough. In the morning, both sides were seen drawn up in order of battle. The Constable

d'Albret, who commanded for Charles VI., committed a fatal error in not allowing his forces a proper space for action. The soldiers impeded each other. The infantry sank above their ankles at every step. The knights rushed to the charge with reckless bravery, separating themselves from the main body, and leaving the soldiers without sufficient officers to direct their movements. Observing the disorder into which their enemies had fallen, the English archers threw away their bows, and, armed with hatchets and leaden mallets, rushed in and accomplished the victory. In this famous battle, where the French numbered five times as many as their opponents, the Dukes of Orleans and Bourbon were taken; the Constable d'Albret, the Duke of Alençon, and two brothers of the Duke of Burgundy were slain; 8,000 knights and gentlemen perished; and the prisoners were actually more numerous than their captors. Finding his army in its present condition as much exhausted by victory as if it had suffered a defeat, Henry withdrew to Calais, and thence carried his prisoners by sea to England.

The capture of the Duke of Orleans now robbed the Armagnacs of half their authority, and though the count of that name succeeded in obtaining the office of Constable, the Parisians revolted against his iron rule; opened their gates by night to the Duke of Burgundy; seized and massacred the count and all his party; and, but for the active loyalty of Du Chastel, governor of the Bastile, would have murdered the Dauphin likewise. The ferocities committed on this occasion are only to be equalled by the butcheries of Wexford and Scullabogue, or the deeds of the Reign of Terror.

In the year 1417 died Louis II., titular king of Naples.

Returning now to France with a reinforced army, Henry V. made himself master of Normandy, and in January, A.D. 1419, entered Rouen. Charles the Dauphin flew to head the remnant of the Armagnacs, and, in consideration of the peril of the country, a reconciliation was proposed with the Duke of Burgundy. A conference was appointed, and the bridge of

Montereau named as the place of meeting. Hither on the 28th of August, 1419, these deadly foes repaired, each attended by ten knights, and each concealing under an aspect of good faith sentiments of the most bitter enmity. No sooner had John the Fearless bent his knee in homage to the Dauphin, than Tanneguy du Chastel leaped the barrier which divided the attendants from the principals, struck the duke with his battle-axe, and, being followed by Louvet, laid him dead at the feet of the Prince of France. This rash deed brought upon the Dauphin the resentment of the city of Paris, and the irreconcilable hatred of Philip the Good, son to the murdered man. Hastening straightway to the English camp, the new duke offered to Henry V. the diadem of the house of Valois. Through his intervention, mainly, the treaty of Troyes was concluded. Henry was declared regent, and married the princess Catherine, daughter of Charles VI., with the understanding that, on the death of the latter monarch, the kingdoms of France and England were to be united under the one sceptre. So profound was their detestation of the Dauphin, and so uncompromising their aversion to the party of the Armagnacs, that the states-general, the magistrates, and the communes of Paris assented without regret to this transfer of sovereignty, and only stipulated that England should govern them according to the laws of France. The conqueror, however, did not live to inherit his new kingdom. Having caused himself and his infant to be publicly crowned, he died suddenly at Vincennes, on the 28th of August, 1422, leaving the Duke of Bedford regent for his son; Charles VI. still nominally reigning; and Charles the Dauphin agitating the provinces of the south. Great changes were now at hand. On the 21st of October, just two months after the death of the English monarch, Charles VI., who for the last thirty years could scarcely have been said to live, terminated his unhappy career. He had reigned for two-and-forty years, and during only the first twelve had enjoyed the exercise of his reason. There is, perhaps, scarcely a more pitiable fate upon record. A mere puppet in the boldest and craftiest hands, he was

made the instrument of every imaginable wrong, and was yet endued by nature with gentle and noble impulses. Plundered by those nearest to him in blood and dearest to his affections, he was himself abandoned, neglected, and despised. The people were ground to the dust; the great princes dissipated the treasures of the crown; the queen devoted herself to profligate pleasures; and the king, imprisoned in a corner of his own palace, moped the days and years away in helpless idiocy, was devoured by vermin, and was frequently left a prey to the tortures of hunger.

When Charles VII., then in Auvergne, heard the intelligence of his father's death, he assumed the royal robes, and received homage from the few adherents that formed his escort. He was at this time just twenty years of age, affable, well-intentioned, and of that variable temperament which relapses into frivolity, rises into valour, or strengthens into prudence with the requirements of the hour. He was so destitute of funds, that the difficulty with which he furnished his table, and the straits to which he was reduced for a pair of boots, are remembered in the chronicles of his reign. His soldiers were chiefly foreigners, Milanese, Spanish, and Scotch; and the young king, who had only honours to bestow, conferred on the Earl of Buchan the rank of Constable of France. Upon these forces Charles relied for the advancement of his cause against Bedford and the English; but, being worsted in the battles of Verneuil and Crevant-sur-Yonne, he applied for aid to the Duke of Brittany, and with his powerful support enjoyed two years of peace at the castle of Chinon. At length the English resolved entirely to crush the legitimists; and, assembling a great army before the walls of Orleans, A.D. 1428, laid siege to this city, which was the chief and last stronghold of the Armagnac party. Hereupon Charles cast aside the indolent indifference which possessed him in his retirement, threw his bravest captains into the place, and prepared a vigorous resistance.

Protected on one side by the broad and rapid waters of the Loire, and affording invaluable facilities for the introduction

of succours, Orleans was particularly difficult to invest, and the operations bore rather the aspect of a campaign than a siege. Although surrounded by a chain of temporary towers, all of which were garrisoned by English, the city held out bravely for many months, and it was not till the approach of Lent that the partisans of the Dauphin began to lose heart. The defeat of the French and Scotch in a sally from the town—the capture of some outworks—and the conquest of the *tête du pont*, reduced the Orleans party to despair. They treated for a surrender, and were on the point of laying down their arms, when an event occurred which changed the entire aspect of affairs, and furnished to history one of its most interesting and remarkable pages.

At the remote village of Domremy, on the Meuse, was born, some twenty years before, a girl named Jeanne d'Arc. Her way of life was very simple and lonely. She tended oxen, and performed such humble duties as befel a serving-maid at a little roadside inn. She was beautiful. She was single-hearted. She was devout. Education and a later age would have made her a poet. As it was, her imaginative temperament inspired her with dreams and reveries, and tinctured with the hues of religious enthusiasm all the impulses and actions of her strange career. There were prophecies afloat at this time that a virgin should accomplish the deliverance of France. Similar rumours have, in moments of peril, prevailed since ever the world began; and this was deserving of no firmer credence than the rest. It was repeated, however, from lip to lip, and travelled, as chance would have it, to the ears of this village maiden in Lorraine. She listened with eagerness. She brooded over it. It informed her dreams, and became identified with her religion. Then she fancied herself the object of the prediction. She saw visions. She heard voices. She was divinely appointed, and through her the king should be crowned at Rheims. To inspire belief, little more is needed than good faith and earnestness on the part of the speaker. Jeanne believed in herself, and, being brought to Chinon where the Court then sojourned,

obtained a ready influence over Charles and his nobles. She clothed herself in armour, and with a train of knights and soldiers entered Orleans. Naturally brave, modest, and enthusiastic, she was soon as much beloved for her virtues as she was revered for her mission. She set in her own person an example of purity and valour, and the superstition of the age in which she lived accomplished the rest. It filled the besieged with confidence. It paralysed the besiegers with terror. It fought her battles for her, and drove the English general from all his forts. Whole companies of the enemy's soldiers deserted, "for feare of the mayde;" and on the 29th of May, 1429, Lord Suffolk found himself compelled to raise the siege. Jeanne now received the title of the Maid of Orleans, and, having fulfilled this much of her task, hastened the march to Rheims that all might be consummated by the coronation of the king. Troyes, strongly garrisoned by hostile troops, lay in their road, but surrendered after one day's resistance; and Rheims, then in possession of the English, was by them abandoned without the striking of a blow. On the 6th of July the royal army entered the city, and on the 7th the ceremony was performed by the archbishop in presence of the heroine and the Court. Then she knelt down before the throne, and prayed to be dismissed once again to her native village and her former occupations. All that she had promised, she had done. Her dreams had foretold her nothing beyond the final triumph of this day; and, although her courage was as steadfast as before, she no longer felt the same reliance upon her military fortunes. Vainly she urged this simple and touching appeal. The king and his generals supplicated her to remain, and she, unwillingly, consented. From henceforth her prosperity was at an end. She was wounded at the siege of Paris, and was taken prisoner in a sortie from the town of Compiègne. She was dragged from her horse by a gentleman of Picardy, who relinquished her to the Burgundian general. He, in his turn, sold her for a large sum to the English regent. She was then conveyed to a prison at Rouen. By every law of humanity and military honour,

Jeanne d'Arc should have been treated as a prisoner of war; but her barbarous captors preferred to regard her as a sorceress. In a room which is still shown to travellers at Rouen, they tried and condemned her; and in the market-place, on the spot where her statue is now standing, they burnt her at the stake. In her captivity she was patient—during her trial she was composed—at her death she was gentle and pious. Her eyes were fixed to the last upon a crucifix; and though her face was covered with tears, her constancy never wavered. As the fire was kindled, and the smoke rose up around her, she murmured, "God be blessed." Thus, on the 30th of May, 1431, ended the sweet and sad story of the Maid of Orleans.

The English cause profited but little by this crime. The tide of fortune had set against them, and the Duke of Burgundy, disgusted with their ferocity, returned to his allegiance. The treaty of Arras was signed. The towns beyond the Somme were ceded to the duke, and he was himself exempted from personal homage. Charles rose into sudden popularity. Paris opened its gates to the king's heralds, and the English had soon nothing left of their French territories, save Normandy and Guienne. From this time the character of Charles VII. underwent a sensible change. He became energetic, warlike, and politic. He abandoned weak and selfish pleasures—organized the first standing army that had been formed in France—founded a court of appeal for the trial of cases of unjust taxation—and in the year 1438, called a meeting of the clergy, nobles, and magistrates, for the purpose of limiting the authority of the Roman pontiff. By the decrees issued on this occasion much arbitrary and dangerous power was removed from the hands of the pope, and the independence of the Gallican Church was established on a secure basis. Commerce now revived, and agriculture recovered from the paralysing effects of invasion and civil war. The king was universally respected as the friend and restorer of order, and the only opposition he encountered was from his rebellious and ungrateful son, Louis the Dauphin. This prince, sup-

ported by his brothers and some dissatisfied officers, headed a revolt called the Praguerie, which was speedily repressed. The younger princes submitted; but Louis retired to his province of Dauphiny, took up his residence there in a style of petty sovereignty, loaded his people with taxes, and governed with insupportable tyranny. The king now sent the Count de Dammartin to arrest and bring him to Paris; but, having received notice of his approach, the prince fled to Burgundy for protection. He was met with courtesy, supplied with money by the duke, and permitted to reside in the Castle of Genappe, near Brussels. Here he remained during the rest of his father's lifetime, and repaid the hospitality of his host by alienating from him the affections of his son, the Count de Charolais. Charles immediately seized upon Dauphiny, appropriated the revenues of the province, and united it to the crown. Thus an enmity that never abated separated for evermore the king and his heir. Louis was suspected, whether justly or otherwise, of intriguing against his father, and of bribing the attendants of the palace to administer poison in his daily food. Devoured by these apprehensions, in perpetual fear of assassination, and broken-hearted at the perversity and falsehood of his children, Charles VII. refused all nourishment, and actually died of starvation on the 22nd of July, 1461, after having reigned in France during a space of thirty-nine years.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF LOUIS XI. TO THAT OF FRANCIS I.
(A.D. 1461—1515.)

THE accession of Louis XI. opens a new epoch in the history of France. Up to this time the government had alternated between feudalism and absolutism—the monarchy had maintained an un-remitting struggle for the preservation of its integrity—the claims of the house of Anjou to its territory beyond the Alps had been feebly urged and were now half-

forgotten—the great vassals of the crown had controlled with their influence and overshadowed with the terror of their arms the prerogatives of royalty—and, above all, the neighbouring kings of England had constantly asserted, and with fire and sword maintained, their ancient right to the inheritance of the fleur-de-lis. Now, however, we enter upon a period when the sovereign became possessed of despotic authority—when the arts of diplomacy were for the first time employed in cases of international dispute—when the increased resources and growing ambition of France led her to fields of southern conquest—and when, in consequence of these enterprises, the great States of Europe first began to form themselves into that still existent confederacy which, by an union of interests, limits the encroachments of the strong, protects the possessions of the weak, and preserves the due balance of power. Some important progress had also been effected in literature, in society, and in the arts. The great masterpieces of antiquity became known, and the histories of Livy, Sallust, and Cæsar were translated into the vernacular. Froissart and Alain Chartier, Oliver de la Marche and Francis Villon, Charles of Orleans and René of Anjou, had contributed to the historical, humorous, and political literature of their age. Dramatic entertainments had come into favour with all classes; and, being supported by the clergy, contributed to the advancement of learning and the refinement of manners. During the reign of Charles VI. alone, three companies had been formed for the representation of pieces sacred and profane—namely, the Brothers of the Passion, who confined themselves to religious spectacles; the Clerks of the Basoche, who introduced comic interludes; and the society of *Les Enfans sans Souci*, which performed nothing but farces. Playing-cards also were invented. Gunpowder had come into use in cases of siege; but had not yet been adapted to individual purposes. Printing, with its untold consequences, was just discovered; and Koster, Faust, Guttenberg, and Schäffer were all labouring to perfect it. Commerce, under the auspices of such men as Jacques Cœur and Cosmo de Medici, rose to

a dignity previously unknown. The productions and requirements of distant nations were ascertained—speculation embraced not only Europe but Asia—and the factors of the great French and English capitalists might be encountered trading and exchanging in all quarters of the civilized globe. Flanders was, however, at this time, the great centre of commercial enterprise, and has been aptly termed the Liverpool of the Middle Ages. Hence France, in her then rude and uncultivated state, obtained those luxuries which she neglected to manufacture for herself: hence imported the silks of Persia—the spices and embroideries of India—the wool-bales of England—the mirrors, wheel-clocks, spectacles, china-ware, and paper of Italy. That the condition of the dwelling-houses, and the personal comforts of the noble and middle-classes should be at the same time ameliorated was a necessary consequence of the extension of mercantile undertakings. The style of dress became very splendid. Robes of satin and velvet, massive gold chains, borderings of minever and marten, rich silken girdles, and embroidered shoes were worn; and the men's hats were adorned with precious stones. It appears that even at this early period the French were ingenious in matters of costume, and inclined to varieties of fashion; for it is quaintly said by a chronicler of the fifteenth century, that "they are always in the extreme. Sometimes their clothes are too long, at others too short; at one time too wide, and at another too tight. And no fashion ever lasts above six or seven years." It must not be forgotten, either, that Gothic architecture arrived during this era at its highest perfection. Such, then, had been the advances made since the accession of the family of Valois, and such was the state of France when Louis XI. left his refuge at the court of Burgundy to be crowned in the cathedral at Rheims.

The king was now in the thirty-ninth year of his age. The selfish, artful and covetous disposition for which he was conspicuous in his youth, had become confirmed with years, and strengthened by adversity. Depraved himself, he endeavoured all his life to corrupt the principles of others, and enjoys the

unenviable distinction of having been the first to ridicule the generous laws of chivalry. Cruelty, rapacity, sensuality, and parsimony were the governing passions of his soul. He forfeited his word without scruple, and his oath without remorse. He delighted in falsehood for the mere sake of deceiving, and so occasionally overreached and defeated himself. He detested the high-born, and surrounded himself by men of low extraction and debased manners. Added to all this, he was a slave to the grossest superstition. He purchased relics at enormous prices from all parts of Europe. He wore little images of saints and angels in his cap. He made confession daily. He undertook pilgrimages to celebrated shrines on all occasions of difficulty, and never committed an act of perfidy without first imploring the assistance of the Virgin. For her it appears that he entertained a special devotion. He invented in her honour the prayer known as the *Angelus*. He created her Countess of Boulogne, and he bestowed upon her the commission of Colonel in the Royal Guards. Notwithstanding his perversion of heart, his want of moral obligation, and his singular credulity on points of religious ceremonial, Louis XI. possessed great natural firmness and sagacity, great subtlety, and great political talent. So long as the national interests of France were identical with his own, he diligently and faithfully pursued them. He succeeded in finally dismembering the feudal system. He established the first French printing-press at the Sorbonne. He promoted manufactures, and he protected commerce. In his reign, agriculture, letters and industry were encouraged; and by that edict in which he declared judicial charges permanent, he secured to the parliament its independence and its power. He extended the dominions of the crown, and recovered the mortgaged cities of Amiens, Abbeville, and St. Quentin. Above all, as will be seen upon referring more fully to that important struggle called the War of the Public Good, he succeeded in emancipating his people from the tyranny of the nobles, and carried his country in safety through a political crisis of the utmost danger.

It has been said that Louis XI. beheld in the opening of his reign nothing but the commencement of his long-smouldering vengeance. To humble the princes of the blood; to dismiss the ministers of Charles VII.; to secure the co-operation of the people; and to abolish the Pragmatic Sanction, were among the first acts of his government. Above all, he strove to subject to his power the sovereign Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany, whose dominions surrounded and almost rivalled those of the crown. In order to accomplish this end, he perfidiously conferred upon both the government of Normandy, with the hope of sowing dissension between them; but they, instead, allied themselves against him, received into their confederation the discontented princes, the Duke of Berri, and a number of other nobles whom he had either wronged or insulted, and so marched with a formidable army towards Paris. The king was then in the Bourbonnais; but, hastening back on receipt of this intelligence, came suddenly upon the Burgundians in the neighbourhood of Monthéry. Neither general wished at that moment for an encounter, but, finding the battle unavoidable, both acted with gallantry. The engagement took place on the 16th of July, 1465, and was of such equal advantage that both parties claimed the victory. Louis pushed on immediately for Paris, leaving the Count de Charolais in possession of the field, and, once secure within the walls of his capital, endeavoured to win over by compliances the good-will of the citizens. In the meantime the army of the League having been reinforced from all directions, amounted to no less than 100,000 men, and encamped within sight of the gates of Paris. Hopeless of dispersing it by force of arms, Louis now succeeded in dissolving the League by the arts of policy. He granted to all and each of the leaders whatever they demanded; made the most ample promises and the most abject concessions; saw them strike their tents and return to their several territories; and then, by craftily evading, annulling, and repudiating the terms of his treaty, escaped with but little loss of either land or money, and only the very trifling forfeit of his royal honour. Scarcely a year had

elapsed when the king deprived his brother, the Duke de Berri, of the province of Normandy, and endeavoured to undermine the power of Charles the Bold (now Duke of Burgundy) by tampering with the Flemish subjects of that sovereign vassal. At the same time, the better to mask his designs, he went, with a great show of good faith, to hold a conference with the duke at the town of Peronne. Scarcely had he arrived there, when a revolt which he had fomented broke out at Liège, in Flanders. Charles discovered the treachery that had been practised upon him, and his rage was boundless. He instantly closed the city gates, confined Louis in a tower of the castle, and threatened to place the Duke de Berri on the throne. Even in this difficulty the king's skill and presence of mind did not desert him. By exercising his persuasive powers on Philip de Comines, and others of the duke's attendants, he succeeded in abating the fury of his foe, and on the most galling and humiliating conditions, recovered his liberty. Charles then marched against the unfortunate Liègeois, compelling Louis to bear him company, and be witness of their punishment. The city was stormed and taken, and a horrible massacre followed. When all was over, the king was suffered to depart. From this time an intense hatred subsisted between the duke and his sovereign. Louis could more readily have forgiven a defeat upon the battle-field than a defeat in diplomacy. He could not forget that he had been made to appear ridiculous, and the first pretext of war was eagerly embraced on both sides. This strife was waged with various success for many years, and might have terminated sooner but for the intrigues of the Count de St. Pol, an artful noble, whose private interests were concerned in the continuance of the war. He served both masters; he betrayed both; and by both his treachery was at last discovered. For once the enemies acted in concert. They agreed that if either succeeded in getting St. Pol into his power, he would put him to death before the expiration of eight days, or else hand him over to the mercies of the other. The traitor first trusted him-

self within reach of Burgundy, who seized and sent him to Paris, where he was condemned by Louis, and deservedly executed, December 19th, 1475. Not many months before this event, Edward IV. of England, upon the invitation of the duke, who was his relation by marriage, had landed at Calais with a formidable army. Tremblingly mindful of the days of Cressy and Agincourt, Louis resolved, if possible, to negotiate with this new enemy. The matter was not difficult. Edward had been persuaded to the war, and, having no personal interest beyond the hope of gain, consented willingly to a truce. He then received a tribute of seventy-five thousand crowns, quietly drew off his forces, and returned to England. Louis acted on this occasion with admirable policy. He treated the strangers (whom he hated cordially) with the utmost courtesy. He bestowed gifts and pensions on the foreign ministers. He gave the soldiers an entertainment at Amiens; and he concluded a treaty by which it was agreed that the eldest daughter of Edward IV. should marry with the Dauphin. This treaty was signed at Pequigny, on the 29th of August, 1475.

The Duke of Burgundy, restless and ambitious as ever, was now employed in a vain attempt to subjugate the Swiss. These brave mountaineers defended their liberties with a valour which he had little anticipated, and his armies were repulsed at the famous battles of Granson and Morat. Not content to take warning by defeat, Charles hazarded a third engagement at Nancy, in the month of January, 1477, wherein his troops were routed, and himself treacherously murdered by an Italian favourite who cherished against him some unknown cause of vengeance. Thus fell the last Duke of Burgundy. His vast territories, which extended from the northern coasts of Holland to the frontiers of Helvetia, now descended to the feeble hands of Mary, his daughter, whose beauty, virtues, and misfortunes are yet remembered and lamented by the people of Flanders. The joy of Louis on receipt of this welcome intelligence was as sincere as it was unconcealed. He instantly seized upon the duchy of Bur-

gundy, attacked some towns in Picardy, and endeavoured to secure the hand of the heiress for Prince Charles, the Dauphin. To this, however, the Flemings would not consent. Maximilian, eldest son of the Emperor of Austria, was selected for her husband, and in him the king encountered a resolute and powerful enemy. War then ensued between Maximilian and Louis, and the Flemings applied to England for assistance. Here, however, the well-laid plans of the French king stood him in good service. Edward IV. was still in receipt of an annual tribute from the royal treasury—his daughter was betrothed to the Dauphin—his ministers and great lords were most of them pensioners of France; and, on the whole, England was never less disposed to break the bonds of peace. The only incident of any importance connected with this war was the sanguinary and indecisive battle of Guinegate, fought in 1479 by the French under General de Crèvecœur, against the Burgundian troops of Maximilian. In 1482 was concluded the treaty of Arras, whereby peace was established, and the infant daughter of the Duchess Mary was betrothed to the Dauphin. It is said that this breach of faith hastened the death of Edward IV., who had centred his ambition on the marriage of his own daughter with the heir of France.

Louis had now outlived most of his enemies, and quieted the rest either by force of arms or the milder methods of bribery and persuasion. He had attained to such power and wealth as had never yet been possessed by a king of France. He had wrested a considerable district from the house of Burgundy. He had purchased the county of Boulogne. He had inherited from his uncle, King René of Sicily, the provinces of Bar and Provence, and the vague claims of Anjou upon the crown of Naples. And now, at this moment of his greatness and prosperity, when the fruits of crime, deceit, and rapacity were all assured, sickness and a deep melancholy fell upon him. He felt that his constitution was broken; and (with the reputation of having caused more than 4000 persons to be put to death by different modes of execution) he

trembled at the thought that he must also die. He retired to his castle of Plessis-lez-Tours, and thought to keep out the dread visitor by surrounding it with spiked ditches and extra fortifications. He feared his son. He feared his nobles. He feared his subjects. No person of rank resided within the walls. Passers-by were not permitted to approach within half a league. Mantraps to the number of ten thousand were laid about the avenues. Suspicious characters were hung or drowned without trial; and the Scotch archers, who kept watch day and night upon the battlements, had orders to shoot down all who came within reach of their arrows. Scarce a tree in all the forests round but bore among its boughs the body of some hapless trespasser. Scarce a streamlet bubbling through the deep grass but was fouled by some such hideous tribute. Within the walls as many precautions were observed. He resided in a suite of thirty rooms, all of which communicated one with another, and were secured by six complicated locks. No one knew in which of these he slept, and he never inhabited the same for two successive nights. He grew more fanatical with every day, and more pitiless. His terrors prompted him to hourly enormities, and his love of life to the most pitiable abasement of soul. He became the slave of his physician, and "he wearied Heaven and every saint with prayers, not for the forgiveness of his sins, but for the prolongation of his life." He was anointed from the holy phial of Rheims. He weighed himself down with mouldering reliques. He even drank the blood of infants to revive the failing current of his own. At last this wretched exhibition came to a close, and on the 30th of August, 1483, the tyrant died.

Charles VIII. was now fourteen years of age, naturally delicate, and much neglected in his education. Although legally arrived at his majority, he was, by his father's will, entrusted to the guardianship of his elder sister, Anne de Beaujeu, who forthwith assumed the reins of government. Jealous of this preference, and unwilling to submit to the regency of a woman, the princes of the blood, headed by the

Duke of Orleans, convoked the states-general, in the hope of displacing her. Contrary to their expectations, the parliament did full justice to the talents and wisdom of this princess, and only met to confirm her authority, and to effect many just and necessary reforms. The Swiss mercenaries were disbanded; the taxes were reduced; and further efforts were made to limit the power of the clergy. Finding that he could exercise only a secondary influence, the Duke of Orleans went over to the Court of Brittany, succeeded in attaching the duke to his cause, and, at the head of a numerous army, encountered the French under General La Tremouille, near St. Aubin, on the 28th of July, 1488. The action proved fatal to the Bretons. The Duke of Orleans was taken prisoner; and the lady regent, who was not remarkable for clemency, confined him in an iron cage in the castle of Bourges—concluded an advantageous treaty with the Duke de Bretagne—and put to death every rebel that had been captured on the field.

Not long after the restoration of peace, the Duke of Brittany died, and the sovereignty of the province descended to his daughter Anne, then thirteen years of age. Princes and nobles contended for the hand of the young heiress, who chose from among the number Maximilian of Austria, now become a widower by the death of Mary of Burgundy. They were betrothed, and, in the absence of the bridegroom, married by proxy. No arrangement could have been less satisfactory to Anne of Beaujeu and her brother Charles VIII. It had long been their aim to unite Brittany with the crown, and they had striven vainly to acquire it by force of arms. Finding an invincible obstacle to their plans in the rooted independence of the Bretons, they now sought some more pacific means of success, and it was proposed that Charles should espouse the young duchess; supplant the tardy Maximilian, who had not yet claimed his bride; break off his own engagement to that same Maximilian's daughter, the Lady Margaret; and thus unite Brittany to the royal dominions. This arrangement was not attended with the loss that it would have been, had not the province of Burgundy been

lately added to the French crown. Anne was a wealthier bride than Margaret—Charles was the most powerful sovereign in Europe—and so the marriage was made; and in both its matrimonial projects the house of Austria was foiled. This singular event took place December 10th, 1491. The French king was now just twenty-two years of age, and had emancipated himself from the tutelage of his elder sister. He was amiable, inconsiderate, and romantic. Never having received any solid education, he read with eagerness and believed implicitly all the impossible romances of the preceding century. He was seized with the desire of becoming a hero and a conqueror, and dreamt dreams that rivalled in marvellous chivalry the exploits of Orlando and Sir Tristan of the Lions. Just at this moment accident drew his attention to the old claims of the Anjou family, and he determined to attempt the conquest of Naples. Being instigated to this step by Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, who was at enmity with the King of Naples, he assembled an army of only 18,000 men, and started away in the autumn of 1494 with but little money, no provisions, and a suite of young noblemen who formed his court and served as volunteers. Never was so serious an enterprise so thoughtlessly undertaken, or followed by results so extraordinary. North Italy consisted at this time of a number of small republics, all of which were republics only in name, and were governed by the nobles. These nobles formed a federation of states; a miniature Europe, where the policy of all ensures the general equilibrium. Terrified at first by the intervention of a foreign potentate, the states preserved a timid neutrality. Lucca, Pisa, and Florence threw open their gates, and Charles entered Rome as a conqueror without having struck a single blow. The pope was as much alarmed as others, and shut himself up for safety in his castle of St. Angelo; while Charles, to assert his right of jurisdiction, only paused to hang a few turbulent Romans on the public gallows, and then marched towards Naples. Even there he met with no resistance. King Alphonso was reduced to an agony of terror,

and when told that the French army was actually upon its way, abdicated in favour of Ferdinand his son, took ship for Sicily, and entered a convent at Messina. Ferdinand wanted neither talent nor courage, but he found his army cowardly and seditious. At first sight of the enemy they were panic-stricken, and the prince fled to Ischia as Charles, at the head of his army, entered Naples. This unparalleled triumph utterly intoxicated the boyish king and his brainless council. Feasting and gallantry became the only care of the conquerors. Affairs of state were neglected. The northern cities were left without protection, and to very few were even garrisons appointed. The soldiers lived by pillage. The stores were squandered. The inhabitants were wronged. The nobles were deprived of their estates, and the French volunteers enriched at the expense of those whose hereditary rights had been undisputed for centuries. This condition of things could not last long. Gradually all Italy coalesced against the invader, and the European powers, startled at the rapid prosperity of France, joined the league. The King of Arragon, the Archduke Maximilian, the States of Venice and Lombardy, and even his old ally, Ludovico Sforza, assembled in great force, and, commanded by Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, encountered and gave battle to Charles as he was returning homeward with a portion of his army. The troops of the allies amounted to more than 40,000 men, and Charles, who had left nearly half his soldiers in Naples and Calabria, found himself with less than a fourth of their numbers. He was at this time expecting the Duke of Orleans with a reinforcement of 9000 men; but discovered, after waiting for some days, that the duke (unable to resist the temptation of attacking Milan, to which he possessed an hereditary claim) had led his troops thither, and was now blockaded in the town of Novara. Charles then endeavoured to negotiate, but in vain. The enemy awaited him in the Pass of Fornova, and on the 6th July, 1495, attacked him, front and rear. Hereupon, the king and his little army charged with extraordinary gallantry, broke through the ranks of the allies, and passed

onwards to Asti, having lost only eighty men, and slain 3000 of the enemy. Resting at Asti for a short time, Charles concluded a treaty with Sforza, obtained the liberty of the Duke of Orleans, and then, weary of warfare, impatient for pleasure, and cured of his taste for foreign conquest, hastened to Lyons and plunged into every kind of dissipation. In the meantime Ferdinand had applied to the Spanish sovereign for aid, and, with the assistance of Gonsalvo di Cordova and a body of Arragonese soldiers, succeeded in expelling the remainder of the invading army from Naples. The French, to the number of 5000, laid down their arms, and retreated northward. An epidemic broke out among them. Their general, the Count de Montpensier, was attacked by it at Pozzuolo, and died; and of all his army, scarcely five hundred returned to their native country. This intelligence was brought to Charles, then at Lyons and immersed in idle pleasures. He once more roused himself to action, collected an army, and was preparing to avenge the honour of the French nation, when, from some unknown cause, he suddenly changed his mind—turned his attention from military to home affairs—set about reforming abuses—established a supreme council—dismissed certain venial judges—attended personally to the complaints of his people, and was about to effect a reduction in the taxation, when death put an end to his projects and deprived France of a king who was, if not one of the wisest, one of the most amiable and beloved that ever sat upon the throne. The manner of his death is related by Comines, who says that as Charles was one day leading the queen into a gallery of their castle at Amboise, for the purpose of observing a game of tennis, he struck his head against a low archway, and, not being severely hurt, took no notice of the blow. Entering into conversation with some gentlemen near, he spoke in praise of virtue, and said he hoped never to commit another wilful sin as long as he lived. Scarcely had he spoken the words, when he was struck with apoplexy, and, being laid upon a pallet bed which chanced to stand in the gallery, expired in the course of a few hours. It was then

the spring time of 1498. He was just twenty-eight, and had reigned fifteen years. His mildness and good-nature were the theme of all his contemporaries, and it is written by Comines that, "never did he say to any man a thing that might displease him." By those who knew how limited his education had been, his military successes were looked upon as prodigies; and indeed, when we consider the incapacity of the leader, the inexperience of his council, and the number of his soldiers, this conquest of Italy does really deserve to be classed among the marvels of history. Having within the space of two years lost his three infant sons, Charles VIII. was succeeded by the Duke of Orleans.

Louis XII., surnamed the Father of his People, inherited the crown at thirty-six years of age, and assumed with the sovereignty of France the titles of King of Jerusalem, King of the Two Sicilies, and Duke of Milan. This monarch had been tried by many adversities; had led a thoughtless and extravagant life in his youth; and now, like Prince Hal, forsook his old haunts and companions; forgave his ancient enemies; applied himself diligently to the administration of public affairs; and, by continuing the reforms begun by Charles VIII., secured the gratitude, the obedience, and the attachment of his subjects. His first step was to procure a divorce from Joan, his wife, second daughter to Louis XI., a lady whom he had been compelled to marry many years before, and who, in consequence of her personal disadvantages, had never been so fortunate as to engage his affections. Alexander VI. now wore the triple crown, and Louis, by presenting his son, Cæsar Borgia, with the duchy of Valentinois, secured the dispensation which he so ardently desired. Joan then retired to a convent, and Louis espoused the widow of Charles VIII., thus continuing the union of Brittany and France. At the same time he confirmed the brave La Tremouille in his command of the army, and appointed Cardinal d'Amboise to the office of prime minister. This was the first occasion upon which the authority of the sovereign had ever been legally delegated into the hands of a subject. Ruler

now of the fairest and broadest territory of any European sovereign, Louis XII. cherished the same vain Italian projects as his predecessor, and still coveted the comparatively unimportant duchy of Milan. In pursuance of this object he sent an army into Italy, July, 1499, and made an easy conquest of Genoa and the Milanese. Sforza took refuge with his son-in-law, Maximilian, now Emperor of Austria; but finding that Milan entertained no friendly sentiments to the conqueror, returned at the head of an army to recover his domains. La Tremouille instantly crossed the Alps with fresh forces, and attacked Sforza at Novara. Swiss mercenaries were engaged on both sides. They made a mere pretence of fighting when opposed to each other, and, learning that the French pay exceeded that of the Italian, all those engaged for the Milanese deserted in a body to La Tremouille, threw open the gates of the city, and delivered up their duke to the enemy. This nobleman was bitterly hated by the French. He had been the first to invite Charles VIII., and the first to betray him; and he had made himself odious to the Italians by his malversations. From Louis he experienced less clemency than he was entitled to expect as a prisoner of war, but more, perhaps, than was due to the measure of his crimes. He was removed to France, and imprisoned for life in the castle of Loches.

The king now aimed at extending his power farther south, and, having aided the Borgias in subduing Romagna, concluded, in the year 1500, a secret treaty with Ferdinand of Arragon, by which it was agreed that France and Spain should make a partition of Naples. They pour'd in accordingly upon that devoted kingdom. Frederick, the reigning monarch, confid'd at first in the Spanish general; was betrayed; fled to Ischia; and was at length in a small degree compensated by Louis with the duchy of Anjou. And now the spoliators began to dispute among themselves. Being both usurpers, they quarrelled about their mutual "rights," and contended for the revenues, for the cattle taxes, and for the frontier lands. It was not long before hostilities com-

menced between the French viceroy, Louis, Duke de Nemours, and the Spanish commander, Gonsalvo di Cordova. Two great battles were fought, on two successive days, at Seminara and Cerignola, in both of which the armies of Louis were routed; and so, quite suddenly, in the year 1503, the King of Arragon possessed himself of the whole of Naples, and left only the fortresses of Gaeta in the hands of his late ally. Enraged at this want of faith, Louis raised a gigantic army, and sent two divisions into Spain, and one towards Naples. All of these enterprises were unsuccessful. The general, La Tremouille, fell dangerously ill, and the Marquis of Mantua proved an inefficient successor. The Italian division was delayed in Rome by the confusion consequent upon the death of Alexander and the illness of Cæsar Borgia, both of whom had drunk by mistake of a poison which they had intended for others. Deprived of these powerful friends, beset by Gonsalvo and his army, and commanded by their irresolute general, the Duke of Mantua, the French troops were put to flight; Gaeta surrendered to the Spanish flag; and Naples was won and lost again. The grief and disappointment of Louis were upon this occasion so severe that he became dangerously ill, and his wife, Anne of Brittany, took advantage of his weak condition to betroth her daughter to Prince Charles of Luxembourg, grandson to Maximilian, and afterwards the celebrated Charles V. The conditions of this betrothal were such as the king, had he been in possession of his health and judgment, would never have countenanced. Milan, Brittany, and Burgundy were assigned as the marriage portion of the Princess Claude, and to have so alienated those provinces from the crown would have been to alienate the half of the kingdom of France. Fortunately the king recovered, and the states-general, assembling at Tours, besought his majesty to revoke his rash engagement and betroth the Princess Claude to Francis, Count of Angoulême, heir presumptive to the throne. Louis recognised the justice of this petition, broke the former disgraceful treaty, and celebrated the new betrothal with great splendour. So long, however,

as the queen lived, she never suffered the marriage to take place.

In 1508, Louis entered unwisely into the League of Cambrai—a confederation formed between Maximilian, the pope, and the King of Arragon, all of whom were his enemies, and directed against the liberties of the Venetians, who were his only friends south of the Alps. The French then marched against Venice, and on the 14th of May, 1509, gained the victory of Agnadel, an action which weakened the ocean republic, and proved no gain to France. Immediately after this engagement the league was dissolved, and hostilities broke out between the pope and the king. A new confederation was soon organized between the Venetians, the Swiss, the King of Arragon, and Pope Julius II; and now their arms were united against Louis. The king's generals, among whom were Bayard, De Chaumont, and the famous Gaston de Foix, Duke de Nemours, hesitated to war against the Church; but the commons and the states-general combated their prejudices, and declared that as Julius had taken up the profane sword, he was no longer to be held sacred from military retaliation. Upon this, a fresh army was despatched under the command of Gaston de Foix, and the great battle of Ravenna was fought on the 11th of May, 1512. The French were again victorious. The two generals, Peter of Navarre and Fabricio Colonna, the Marquis of Pescara, and the Cardinal of Medicis, were taken prisoners; but the brave conqueror himself, then only twenty-two years of age, fell pierced with fourteen wounds. This was the last French triumph in Italy. The pope, though defeated, was unsubdued as ever, when death put an end to his ambitious projects, and he was succeeded by the Cardinal Medici, known as Leo X. The new pontiff adopted the policy of his predecessor. He united the Emperor Maximilian, the King of Spain, and Henry VIII. of England, in a coalition called the League of Malines, and declared war with France. The brave old general, De la Tremouille, again took the field, and led a French army into Lombardy. Once more Louis turned his eyes upon Milan,

the object of his life-long ambition. The city, as usual, submitted, and the conquerors besieged Novara, which was garrisoned by 6000 Swiss. These mountaineers, inspired by an implacable hatred of the French, poured out by night in a desperate sally, carried the entrenchments of La Tremouille, turned his guns upon his own camp, and won a signal victory. All was now over. The veteran, himself badly wounded, re-crossed the Alps; abandoned Venice to its own resources; and returned to France. Weary at length of this exhausting war, and hopeless of ever retaining territories so easily won and so perpetually lost, Louis beheld the illusory fabric of his conquests all fallen to ruin, nor again thought of retrieving his Italian power. Naples had now passed entirely into the hands of Spain; Genoa had revolted; and Milan, for which so much had been so frequently risked, had returned to the family of the Sforzi. The king, henceforth, devoted himself to home affairs; and having lost his wife in January, 1514, married not many months after with Mary, sister of Henry VIII., a young and beautiful princess, whose affections had been pre-engaged to the Duke of Suffolk, and who was reluctantly compelled to subscribe to the dictates of state policy in her acceptance of the French monarch. Louis now made various alterations in his hours, his mode of life, and his amusements; and these changes, intended to do honour to his bride, so disordered his health, as to leave her, in the course of some few weeks, a widow. He died on the 1st of January, 1515, deeply lamented by the middle and lower classes, whose father, friend, and protector he had been. Economical in his private expenditure, forbearing in his demands upon the public purse, and impartial in the administration of justice, he had earned the honourable surname by which he was known to his age. This merciful and prudent disposition met with little sympathy from the nobles, who looked upon his economy as parsimony, and styled him, contemptuously, *le roi roturier*, or the plebeian king. A great alteration was now, however, to take place in the Court. A gallant, lavish, and brilliant sovereign was to surround the throne with all the splendours of learn-

ing and chivalry. Francis I., and the Renaissance of Art in France, were about to enter on the scene.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF FRANCIS I. TO THE EXTINCTION OF THE
HOUSE OF VALOIS.
(A.D. 1515—1589.)

FRANCIS I. ascended the throne at an epoch when the sovereignties of Europe had become absolute in authority—when the great territorial noblesse had almost disappeared—when the republican states were for the most part weakened and oppressed—and when all the great discoveries and improvements of the preceding century were beginning to flourish and bear fruit. A spirit of theological inquiry was abroad. The Roman Catholic Church, having fulfilled its mission of civilization; having kept down the frightful anarchies of early barbarism and sown the leading principles of virtue; having restrained the enormities of tyrants and preserved in the seclusion of convent and priory the neglected treasures of learning, now fell into paths of misdoing, and prepared the way for the Reformation. A long line of iniquitous popes had filled the pontifical chair, and men's minds revolted from the crimes of Alexander VI., the butcheries of Julius II., and the frivolities of Leo X. Wickliffe and Huss had already spoken words of eloquent scorn, and a greater man than either had now risen up from an Augustine cloister to shake the papal power to its foundations. Against the shameless traffic of indulgences, against the guilty debaucheries of the clergy, against the pride, the rapacity, and the haughty despotism of Rome, preached Martin Luther, the monk of Wittenberg. A revolution as important had taken place in the world of science, enterprise, and letters. Christopher Columbus had in 1492 opened to trade and emigration the shores of the New World; and in 1497, Vasco de Gama discovered the route to India by doubling the Cape of Good Hope. Mari-

time commerce now in a great measure deserted the ports of the Mediterranean, and the fleets of Europe traversed the great ocean with the riches of both hemispheres. The general use of gunpowder, the active propagation of knowledge by means of the printing press, and the improvements in judicature, all tended to emancipate opinion and cultivate the desire of progress. Above all, the wars in Italy, impoverishing and futile as they had been in a political point of view, had yet imbued the French with an advanced taste for literature, an admiration of art, and an inclination for philological study. It was impossible that a people so receptive of all that is novel and agreeable should witness without emulation the artistic and literary glory of Florence and Rome. They could not fail to be attracted by the elegance of Petrarch, the grandeur of Dante, the subtlety of Machiavelli, and the brilliancy of Boccaccio and Ariosto. They could not enter St. Peter's, unfinished as it was, without a wish to improve the architecture of the Louvre; or contemplate the masterpieces of Raphael and Michael Angelo without the desire to enrich their palaces in France with the wealth of fresco, sculpture, and painting. It was left, however, for Francis I. (the aristocratic king, as he was called,) to realize that which his predecessors had vainly attempted, and to naturalize in France that passion for beauty and that generous encouragement of genius by which she has ever since been distinguished. Italy was at this epoch the centre of philosophy and art. The great houses of Medici, of Este, of the Visconti and the Sforzi, patronized all the talent and promoted all the researches of the age. The philosophy of Plato, the works of Vitruvius and Archimedes, the commentaries of archæologists, and the exhumed monuments of antiquity were alike pressed into the service of the arts, and made a part of that education imposed by the great and learned upon the students in the schools. Statues and vases adorned the gardens, precious volumes furnished the libraries, bronzes and chased cups, mosaics, intaglios and enamels filled the cabinets of Italy's munificent princes. To rival these splendours, to im-

port art, architecture and poetry became the aim, and constitutes the lasting glory, of Francis I. Primaticcio and Leonardo da Vinci were his pensioners and guests. To build his palace of Fontainebleau and reconstruct the Louvre, a legion of Italian architects and painters were employed. He purchased at enormous prices, and from all parts of Europe, paintings, sculptures, medals, cameos, and objects of *virtù*. From Italy alone he obtained one hundred and twenty-four antique statues, exclusive of busts. He caused a mould of Trajan's column to be executed in bronze. He even strove to remove the famous fresco of the Last Supper from the walls of the refectory of the Convent of Santa Maria at Milan; but was compelled at last to relinquish the project, since it could only have been accomplished with injury to the picture. In his superb encouragement of art, in his munificent donations to colleges and schools, in the liberality of his invitations to scholars and poets, Francis I. stands, perhaps, without a rival amid the monarchs of history. He obtained the title of "Patron of Learning and the Arts," and, whatever faults may be disclosed in his character by the succeeding pages, it cannot be denied even by the most prejudiced of his detractors, that his name has been deservedly handed down to later ages as that of a great and magnificent sovereign.

Brave, generous, gay, and possessed of all the attractions of youth, beauty and high breeding, Francis I., Count of Angoulême, and cousin to Louis XII., fascinated all classes of his new subjects. Scarcely had he received the crown when, unwarmed by the losses of his predecessors, and stimulated by the same unaccountable ambition which had already cost his country so many gallant lives, he turned his attention to the acquisition of Milan. An army of 60,000 men was despatched by a new road over the Alps, and Prosper Colonna, the pope's general, was surprised and captured by the Chevalier Bayard, while sitting at supper in the town of Villefranche. This important success discouraged the Milanese at the first outset of the campaign; but the Swiss, to the number of twenty thousand, poured in to their aid, and the sanguinary battle of Marignano

nano was fought on the 13th of October, 1515. The action commenced at four o'clock in the afternoon, and lasted with tolerably equal fortune till midnight. It was a hand to hand contest. French and Swiss were all mingled confusedly together; and, as they stood, they now laid down and slumbered side by side. Francis himself found no better resting-place than a gun-carriage. At daybreak the men rose up and recommenced. The French now began to evince a decided advantage—the Venetian general arrived with reinforcements—the Swiss retreated in good order, and the victory was with the king, who thereupon knelt down in the battle-field and received knighthood at the hands of Bayard, “the chevalier without fear and without reproach.” By this splendid victory, gained over the bravest soldiers in Europe, Francis won great glory, and the duchy of Milan. The veteran Trivulzio, who had assisted at seventeen pitched battles, called it the “battle of the giants.” Maximilian Sforza evacuated his capital, and received from France a pension of thirty thousand crowns; and the king, having concluded a treaty with the Swiss, returned triumphantly to Lyons. He next conciliated the pope, promised to annul the Pragmatic Sanction, and to restore to the pontifical court the immense revenues of the annates.* The parliament and university resisted this concordat, and appealed to the Pragmatic Sanction of Charles VII. Francis, enraged at any opposition to his imperious will, threatened the magistrates and parliament with the punishments inflicted upon ordinary rebels; and, having thus reduced them to submission, and established the principles of despotism, congratulated himself upon having placed kings beyond the pale of control. In the year 1516, died Ferdinand, King of Arragon, leaving the crown to his daughter, Joan the Simple, and naming Cardinal Ximenes regent of Castille. Associated with Joan by decree of the Cortes, her son, Charles of Luxembourg, then sixteen years of age, assumed the royal power, and made peace with Francis. The death of

* The first year's revenue of vacant benefices was termed the *annates*, or first-fruits.

the Emperor Maximilian, in 1519, first awakened the spirit of rivalry between France and Spain. Both were candidates for the imperial diadem, and, Frederick of Saxony having declined the contest, it was bestowed upon Charles, thenceforth famous in all history as the Emperor Charles V. Francis was bitterly disappointed by this decision. He sought the friendship of Henry VIII. of England, hoping to win him over as an ally against the increased and increasing power of Spain. A friendly interview was proposed—Guines, near Calais, was named as the place of meeting—three weeks of festivals and tournaments were spent by the two Courts—and the extraordinary splendour displayed on both sides caused the locality to be styled the “Field of the Cloth of Gold.” A treaty of alliance was concluded before the monarchs parted, and a war between France and Spain seemed to be on the point of breaking out. Many events, however, occurred to delay the commencement of hostilities. Insurrections in Spain, and the first religious agitations in Germany, occupied the thoughts and energies of Charles. The new opinions and the daring acts of Luther, usurped for the moment the wonder and attention of Europe. He burnt the pope’s bull in Wittemberg before the members of the university and the assembled citizens, A.D. 1517. The diet of Worms was convoked by the emperor, and the great reformer, under the protection of Frederick of Saxony and a hundred of his knights, appeared before the diet, preached an eloquent defence of his opinions, and then, aided by Frederick, retired to the fortress of Wartburg, beyond reach of his enemies.

During this agitation and division of the public mind, the French, prompted by Leo X., prepared for an invasion of Naples. To this step the emperor was opposed, and Leo, always inconsistent, abandoned his former alliance and embraced the cause of Spain. War was now formally declared, despite the intervention of Henry VIII., who, in his neutral position, assumed the office of mediator, and endeavoured to persuade the monarchs to peace. From this moment up to the end of their lives, these two potentates

usurp the stage of history. With the chances and changes of their fortunes, with their rivalry, their hatred, and their stratagems, the interests of Europe rise and fall; and we, from the vantage ground of more than three centuries of time, stand by, spectators of the game. Francis gave the command of his armies to the Generals Lautrec and Bonnivet, both brave, but rash men; and passed over the superior merits of the Constable de Bourbon, then the finest soldier in France. The imperial troops besieged and took Mourzon and Tournai; but were repulsed from Mézieres by the Chevalier Bayard. Leo attacked and took Parma and Placentia. Milan was lost, A.D. 1521. Lautrec, driven to extremities for want of the supplies which had been promised to him by the king, was forced to withdraw, and returned, defeated, from this fatal contest. France was thus deprived once again of all her Italian conquests, and the king, furious at his losses, loaded the unlucky general with reproaches. Lautrec, defended himself by stating that in consequence of the non-arrival of his promised supplies, his soldiers had deserted and disobeyed him. The intendant-general, Semblançay was summoned, and it was discovered that the sum granted by Francis for the payment of the troops had been intercepted and appropriated by his mother, Louisa of Savoy. The queen-mother was a woman of violent passions and lax morality. Enraged at this discovery, she ever after pursued the unfortunate Semblançay with an implacable hatred, and contrived at last, by means of unfounded accusations, to send him to the scaffold.

In 1522, died Pope Leo X., a man of fine taste, and a patron of the arts; but ill adapted by character for the religious profession. He was succeeded in his office by Adrian VI., formerly preceptor to the emperor, who thus secured the good-will of a most important ally; while Francis, impetuous in war and careless in administration, was already worsted in Italy, negligent of the merits of his own best officers, and alienating by injustice his most valuable supporters. In want of money, in want of generals, in want of friends, he still persisted in his ruinous passion for the possession of

Milan. He put the judicial offices up to sale, and, with the funds so raised, equipped a third army and took the road to Italy, intending this time to command in person. An unanticipated disaster, however, occurred to frustrate his measures. The Constable Bourbon, driven to desperation by the malice of the queen-mother and the indifference of the king, deserted into Germany and re-appeared at the head of the armies of the Emperor Charles V. Fearful of leaving his kingdom undefended with this treasonable example before the eyes of the disaffected, Francis consigned his army to the command of Bonnivet, and remained to protect the rights of the crown. The campaign, under Bonnivet, was singularly unfortunate. He was forced to raise the blockade of Milan, and, hotly pressed by Lannoy and Pescara, two of the emperor's most skilful generals, was driven from all his posts, and compelled to retreat. It was during this retreat that the admirable Bayard received his death-wound while guarding the passage of a bridge near Romagnano, May, 1524. Francis now resumed the command of his forces, being alarmed by the approach of the Constable Bourbon, who had invaded Provence and laid siege to the city of Marseilles. As the king advanced the enemy retreated, and Francis, elated with success, had the imprudence to follow them across the Alps, and again invest Milan. The duchy submitted; and the king laid siege to Pavia. Want of ammunition and neglect of the commonest precautions rendered the French efforts worse than useless. After lying for three months before the city walls, Francis found the siege no farther advanced, and the armies of the emperor on their way to overwhelm his disorganized camp. Strangely obstinate, and blind to the inevitable consequences of his obstinacy, the king refused to raise the siege, and, in his entrenchments, awaited the attack. On the 25th of February, 1525, the battle began. Even then, notwithstanding the disparity of numbers, there might have been some chance, but for the rash valour with which Francis and his knights charged into the midst of the enemy, and by placing themselves within reach of their own

cannon, deprived themselves of that aid in the contest. The artillery ceased its fire; the action became no longer an assault, but a battle on the open plain; the Duke of Alençon took flight; the king and his party were hemmed in by the whole imperial army; and Francis himself, wounded, dismounted, covered with blood and dust, and fighting gallantly to the last, was taken prisoner. Henry II., the young sovereign of Navarre, was captured at the same time; General Bonnivet was killed; and ten thousand French were left upon the field. Overwhelmed with grief, and foreseeing in his capture nothing but the ruin of his kingdom, Francis, after a brief captivity in Italy, was transferred to Madrid; kept in close confinement; and humiliated by the neglect of the emperor, who had resolved to profit by his victory to the utmost. The haughty and active spirit of the French monarch sank under this burden, and he fell ill in prison. Charles, fearful then of losing his victim, relented, and visited him with much show of cordiality. Francis recovered, and was offered his liberty upon terms with which he at first refused to comply. But after some time, having been for twelve months a captive, and wearying for France and freedom, he consented to sign the treaty, and was exchanged upon the frontier, for his two sons, who were given over as hostages to Spain. By this treaty the king agreed to relinquish Burgundy, Flanders, and Artois; to resign all claim to Milan and Naples; to re-establish Bourbon in his estates and privileges, and, being himself a widower at this time, to marry Eleanora of Portugal, sister to Charles V. Once past the boundary river, Francis sprang upon horseback, waved a hasty farewell to his children, now on the opposite bank, and galloped, without drawing rein, to Bayonne. Here he threw off all restraint, and every obligation of honour. Being forced to disgraceful concessions, he held himself justified in refusing to fulfil them; and disregarding the condition of his sons, upon whom the emperor ungenerously expended his indignation, repudiated all the articles of the treaty. The war was now renewed, and a general league was formed against the tyranny

of Charles. The pope and the Italian States, exasperated by the cruelty of the Spanish troops, espoused the French cause; and Henry VIII. of England entered the confederation. The ambition and power of the emperor had by this time given just cause for alarm to all the powers of Europe, and they were not sorry to embrace the present opportunity of uniting against him. Charles, on his side, sent Bourbon with an army into Italy, and promised him, if successful, the investiture of the Duchy of Milan. Milan was taken, and Bourbon marched to Rome, pacifying his discontented soldiers with a prospect of such rich plunder as they had never grasped before. The pope and his cardinals retired to the Castle of St. Angelo; the citizens defended the walls; and the assault commenced on the 5th of May, 1527. Bourbon was killed at the first onset; but the city was taken, sacked, and given up to the licence of his barbarous soldiery, who kept possession of it for several months, besieging the pope in his castle, and committing every excess that ignorance and wickedness could devise. At length a plague broke out. The invaders died by thousands; but refused even then to abandon their prey. At length, when ten months had thus elapsed, Lautrec, having reduced Milan, advanced to the relief of the pope. The Spaniards, decimated by the plague and reduced by debauchery, evacuated Rome upon the first summons, and of all the hosts of Bourbon, scarce five hundred men marched out. Lautrec then proceeded towards Naples; but being himself attacked by the epidemic, fell sick and died on the way. His army capitulated to the emperor, and so ended finally the Italian enterprises of Francis I.

In 1529, the resources of both sovereigns being well nigh exhausted, peace was made, and the young princes were restored on payment of a tribute of twelve hundred thousand crowns. The king married Eleanora of Portugal, resigned all pretensions to Italy, ceded a large portion of the Low Countries, and left his Italian allies to the vengeance of the emperor. In 1531 died the queen-mother, Louisa of Savoy, leaving in her coffers the prodigious sum of 1,500,000 golden

crowns. Francis I., now enjoying an interval of peace, appropriated the greater part of this sum to the noble purpose of which we have spoken so fully at the opening of the present chapter; and, at the same time, founded and endowed the college of France. While he was thus contributing, however, to the cause of learning and art, he was also exerting his authority in another way to suppress truth and the spirit of progress. The reformers, already sufficiently persecuted by Charles of Spain and Henry of England, found in him their most barbarous and determined enemy. He forbade their books to be printed; confiscated their property; and even caused six Protestants to be burnt alive. Perceiving at length that to persevere in these severities would be to draw upon himself the indignation of the Lutheran princes of Germany, the king desisted from his persecutions and issued an edict of toleration. The emperor, who had only been waiting for a favourable moment, resumed hostilities by laying siege to Marseilles in the year 1536; was repulsed by General de Montmorenci; and forced to retreat for want of provisions. In the same year Prince Francis, the Dauphin, died suddenly; and the king, believing him to have been poisoned by emissaries of Spain, formed an alliance with the Mussulman empire, and proposed an invasion of Italy. Pope Paul III. now interposed; negotiated a meeting between Francis and Charles; and succeeded in persuading them to a truce of ten years. This treaty was concluded in 1538; and, a revolt breaking out in Flanders not long after, the emperor requested permission to pass through France on his way thither. In return for this favour he offered to bestow the duchy of Milan upon Prince Henry. Francis accepted the proposal, and Charles travelled in safety through his enemy's dominions, met on all sides by festivities and honours, and treated as became so powerful a guest. Notwithstanding the good faith and hospitality of Francis, the emperor soon after declined to keep his word. Milan was never ceded, and the king, enraged, recommenced the war in 1542. Upon this occasion the fickle sovereign of England allied himself with Spain.

The contest was not destined to be of long duration. By the treaty of Crespy it was agreed that Charles should renounce Burgundy, and Francis, Milan, Flanders and Artois. The peace thus concluded was broken no more, and after twenty-five years of unremitting strife, France and Spain became entirely reconciled. The few remaining years of the king's life were now devoted to a renewed persecution of the Protestants. The people of Vaudois had adopted the doctrines of Calvin, and upon them the sword of fanaticism was turned. Twenty-two provincial villages were burnt, and their inhabitants massacred. At Cabrières seven hundred men were slaughtered, and all the women burnt. Houses were razed—woods cut down—gardens destroyed—and a fertile country everywhere desolated and laid in ruin. In the meantime Henry VIII. had taken Boulogne, and a French fleet harassed the coasts of England. A peace was, however, concluded in the month of June, 1546. Francis engaged to pay an annual tribute for the space of eight years, and Henry agreed, at the expiration of that time, to relinquish his valuable conquest. But death soon interposed to mar the contract. Henry died on the 28th of January, 1547, and on the 31st of March he was followed by the King of France, then in the fifty-third year of his age and the thirty-second of his reign. To the last he was accompanied by that magnificence which had characterized every event of his life. His funeral was the most splendid ever seen in France; and, his people, witnessing this last act of homage, mindful of his courage and liberality, and forgetful of his faults, his ambition, and his notorious immorality, bore testimony only to his fine qualities, and pardoned the bloodshed and poverty which his unavailing wars had entailed upon the kingdom. During this reign the Spaniards continued to retain possession of Navarre; but Henry d'Albret, then married to the sister of Francis, retained the title without the authority of king. Francis I. was succeeded by his second son, Henry II., surnamed the Warlike.

Good-natured, lively, and courageous, Henry, without inheriting either his father's talent or dignity, resembled him in

many points, and, like him, was one of the handsomest men of his time. He was married to Catharine, daughter of the famous Lorenzo de Medicis ; a talented, ambitious, and unscrupulous woman, who had as yet displayed none of those evil passions which were destined afterwards to raise up for her so detestable a reputation. She appears to have had little influence with her husband, whose affections were usurped by the beautiful and fascinating Diana of Poitiers. This lady was the widow of the Sieur de Brezé, and though already arrived at middle age, was yet possessed of the most extraordinary loveliness and the most brilliant wit. To her the king resigned himself and his government, and the people, discontented, accused her of sorcery. In 1552, Henry allied himself with the princes of Germany, and declared war against his father's ancient enemy, Charles V. Heading his army in person, the king marched upon the bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, all dependencies of the Empire, and took possession of the city of Cambrai. Shortly after these successes, the German States concluded a treaty for themselves, and withdrew from the contest ; but Henry resolved to continue the war unaided, garrisoned his newly acquired bishoprics, and awaited the struggle. It was already winter, and the season was peculiarly severe ; but Charles, impatient to regain his possessions, would hear of no delay, and besieged Metz in 1552, with one hundred thousand men. The town was ill-constructed for purposes of war ; but it was left to the care of the Duke de Guise, who displayed in its defence so much intrepidity and skill that the great emperor was at last obliged to withdraw his troops with a loss of forty thousand of their number. For three years these hostilities were prolonged between France and Spain. Piedmont, Italy, Corsica and Flanders became each in turn the scene of warfare. Picardy was ravaged by Charles, and Hainault by Henry. The imperial army razed Thérouenne, and the French made the conquest of Hesdin. The battle of Renti was productive more of glory than profit, and Piedmont witnessed a campaign between Alva and Brissac.

Towards the autumn of the year 1555, the celebrated diet of Augsburg was convoked for the purpose of considering the state of religion in Germany. Charles, overborne by the fatigues of a long reign and the failing condition of his health, left the presidency of the diet to his brother, Ferdinand of Bohemia. More tolerant and enlightened than the emperor, this prince took a reasonable view of the prevailing schisms, and entire religious liberty was granted to the Catholic and Protestant states of the German confederation—a decree particularly distasteful to Charles, who had all his life endeavoured to preserve the unity of the Church with the unity of the Empire. Disgusted with politics; finding himself no longer capable of maintaining, either in the camp or the council, his former superiority; and sinking beneath the pressure of severe physical suffering, the emperor now put into execution that extraordinary design which he appears to have meditated from his youth. He resigned and dismembered all those vast dominions which it had been the labour of his life to unite beneath one sceptre. To his son, Philip II., he relinquished Spain, Italy, and the Low Countries; and in favour of his brother, the King of Bohemia, he abdicated the imperial throne of Germany. He then retired to the beautiful and lonely Convent of St. Juste, adopted the garments and duties of a monk, and died a victim to his superstitious austerities in the course of three years. A truce of five years was now concluded between France and Spain; but it scarcely endured for twelve months. Pope Paul IV., anxious to fan the enmity of these two powers, induced Henry to coalesce with him against Philip II., and an army was accordingly despatched across the Alps, under the command of the Duke de Guise. This nobleman marched towards Naples; but, meeting with severe reverses, retraced his steps in time to revive the failing courage of his countrymen, who found themselves invaded by an immense army of Spanish and English soldiers, which Philip, by the assistance of his queen, Mary of England, had assembled before St. Quentin. It was in this siege that Admiral Coligny, nephew to the Constable de Montmorenci,

contrived, with a mere handful of men, to defend the town against the whole army of Spain. Montmorenci hastened to his relief; succeeded with great difficulty in introducing a small body of men into the town; was himself attacked with the remainder of his troops; and, after four hours of fighting, experienced the most disastrous defeat that had been known in France since the days of Poitiers and Agincourt. This battle was fought on the 10th of August, 1557. All the French artillery was taken. Four thousand men were slain, of whom six hundred were gentlemen; and the Constable himself was taken prisoner. Seventeen days after, the town capitulated; but by this time the Duke of Guise had returned, and the king was rapidly organizing means of defence. There was disorder at the same time in the enemy's camp. Philip's German soldiers deserted for want of pay, and the English refused to serve any longer with the Spaniards. The invading legions were in consequence withdrawn; and Guise, eager to revenge the siege of St. Quentin, attacked, and recovered Calais from the hands of the English, in whose possession it had remained since the memorable invasion of King Edward III. 210 years before. By the peace of Cateau Cambresis, Henry and Philip were brought to terms of amity, A.D. 1559. France surrendered Genoa, Corsica, and Naples, and the wars of Italy, which had endured for sixty-five years, were at length terminated. In honour of this peace, two marriages were arranged; one between the Princess Elizabeth of France and Philip, now a widower by the death of his English queen—the other between Margaret, the king's sister, and the Duke of Savoy. The nuptials were performed with great splendour, and in celebration of the first, which took place on the 17th of June, 1559, a tournament was held for three days. The lists reached from the Tournelles to the Bastille, and the king and the Duke of Guise held them against all comers. Both excelled in feats of chivalry, and were victorious. At length the king desired the Count de Montgomeri, one of the captains of the Scottish guard, to break a lance with him. The count, who was equally celebrated for dexterity, endeavoured to

excuse himself; but in vain. They charged, their lances shivered, and Henry was wounded in the eye. This happened on the third day of the tournament. The king fell instantly, and after lying for eleven days without speech or consciousness, expired. In the confusion which distracted the Court, Catharine de Medicis assumed the direction of affairs, and Montgomeri fled to England. No process was instituted against him; but, falling many years after into the hands of Catharine, she caused him to be put to death with cruel tortures.

Francis II., eldest son of the late sovereign, ascended the throne at sixteen years of age. He was devoted to his wife, the beautiful and ill-fated Mary, Queen of Scots, and suffered her uncles, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, to usurp much of the authority of the crown. They, with Catharine de Medicis, governed the country, and excited the indignation of the Princes de Bourbon, who were of the blood royal, and claimed a direct descent from St. Louis. These nobles (of whom one enjoyed the title of King of Navarre, one held the rank of cardinal, and one occupied the principality of Condé) were excluded from all Court influence, and so formed an opposition party to the Guises. The Prince of Condé, who was a man of talent and energy, embraced the reformed religion, and became what was then called a Huguenot, which was another name for a Protestant. His example was followed by D'Audelot and Admiral Coligny, both nephews of the Constable de Montmorenci, who, exasperated at their defection, went over to the faction of the Guises, and lent his aid in exterminating the members of the new faith. Barbarous persecutions ensued. Numbers of Huguenots were burnt at the stake; and the Prince of Condé, having narrowly escaped being implicated in a Protestant plot, which had for its object the abduction of the king and the death of the Guises, retired with his brother, the King of Navarre, into the province of Guienne. Here, however, they still continued to keep up their relations with the hated sect; and the Guises, whose enmity never slumbered, only lay in wait for their destruction.

The states-general were convoked—plots were laid on both sides—Orleans was appointed for the place of meeting—and thither, misled by the treacherous persuasions of their foes, the Bourbon princes came. Immediately upon their arrival, they proceeded to pay their respects to the royal party, and were arrested by the emissaries of the Duke de Guise on their way from the king's presence. The Prince of Condé was brought to instant trial and condemned to death; and the King of Navarre, at the risk of his life, saw and expostulated with the queen-mother. Catharine was deeply agitated. She was not yet steeled to mercy, or hardened by religious and political considerations. She, and her friend, the upright and courageous De l'Hôpital, contrived to delay the execution of the sentence, and the Count de Saucerre refused to sign the death-warrant. In the midst of this critical suspense, the king was taken ill. An abscess had formed in his head, and it became evident, after the lapse of some few days, that he must die. The supreme power now reverted into the hands of the queen-mother. The Guises urged her to put to death not only Condé, but the King of Navarre. She hesitated, resolved to save them, and made the King of Navarre renounce all claim to the regency. He signed the agreement, and the king expired on the 5th of December, 1560.

Charles IX. was but ten years of age when he succeeded to the throne, under the regency of his mother. The interests of the country were already divided, and Court and city had alike ranged themselves with one or other of the prevailing factions. On the side of the Catholic, or Guise party, were assembled the Constable de Montmorenci, the Marshal de St. André, and the whole strength of the Lorraines. The Prince of Condé and Admiral Coligny were the leading men of the Huguenots. The queen, with admirable policy, *finessed* between the two, seeking to balance the power of each, and avoiding the extreme opinions of both. Theological conferences were held between the chief prelates of the Protestant and Romish Church, which ended, as all such discussions must end, unsatisfactorily. It was evident that a civil war was close at hand; and it was

also evident that on the first provocation it must inevitably burst forth. That provocation was not difficult to find when all parties were eager for its discovery; and an affray between the servants of the Duke of Guise and some Huguenots who were insulted by them when at prayers, gave the signal for a general rising. The Prince of Condé now seized upon Orleans, proclaimed that city as the head-quarters of his party, and issued manifestoes to all parts of the kingdom. The Protestants armed and gathered round him, possessing themselves at the same time of several other towns. Philip of Spain took part with the Guises; and Condé, in return for the delivery of Havre and Dieppe, received from Elizabeth of England a reinforcement of 6000 men. Thus commenced the religious wars of France—wars which were destined to last for many years—to sever families and friends—to arrest the progress of the peaceful arts—and to desolate whole provinces with fire and sword. It is said by a French historian, that “if any one were to relate all that passed at this time in different parts of France—all the taking and retaking of towns—the infinity of little combats—the furies—the massacres—it would take up a great many volumes.” In 1562, Rouen, then occupied by the Huguenots, was besieged by the King of Navarre, who had been lately won over by the Guises. He received his death wound while leading an assault against the city walls, and left an infant son, who, being brought up by his mother, Jeanne d’Albret, became afterwards Henry IV. Rouen then surrendered, and its gallant defender, the Count de Montgomery, effected his escape to Havre. The famous battle of Dreux was fought in the same year, on the 19th of December. The great leaders commanded in person on both sides, and the conflict was for some time in favour of the Protestants, who put to flight the Swiss legions, and took the Constable de Montmorenci prisoner. Suddenly, the Duke de Guise poured down upon the conquerors with his cavalry and turned their triumph into a flight. Condé was taken, and the Huguenot army was utterly defeated. A trait of chivalric generosity is recorded of Guise, who, on this occasion, treated his captive with the greatest

consideration; received him more as a guest than an enemy; and shared with him not only his tent but his bed. In the month of February, 1563, the Catholic army besieged and had nearly reduced Orleans, when the Duke de Guise was treacherously assassinated by a Huguenot gentleman named Poltrot, who shot him with his pistol as he was riding in the vicinity of the camp. The murderer was tortured and then executed. The duke lingered for six days; and, dying, exhorted the queen-mother to make peace with her Protestant subjects. Catharine followed his advice; concluded a treaty with the Prince of Condé, and granted lenient conditions to the Huguenot party. The conditions were never fulfilled; but for more than four years there was a suspension of hostilities.

The king now came of age. He was already a profound disimulator, and a zealous adherent to the Church of Rome. A royal progress was proposed. Affairs of state were laid aside, and Charles and his Court proceeded through the blackened cities and wasted provinces of the south. At Bayonne they were met by the Queen of Spain, who had not seen her mother or brother for several years; and by the Duke of Alva, who, in his private conferences with the queen-mother, urged the extermination of the Huguenot faction. Suspicious of these interviews, alarmed by the creation of a new body of royal guards, and indignant at the disregard paid by the Catholic party to the treaty of 1563, the Protestants again rose in arms under Condé and Coligny; pursued the king almost to the gates of Paris; and on the 10th of November, 1567, fought the battle of St. Denis, in which the Constable de Montmorenci fell, and neither party gained any decided advantage. Henry, Duke of Anjou, and third son to Catharine de Medicis, was now, at sixteen years of age, promoted to the command of the royal armies; and a brief peace was concluded with the Huguenots. Hostilities, however, soon commenced afresh. The queen-mother threw off her mask of tolerance, and sided openly with the Catholics, the king, and the young Duke of Guise, who had inherited with his father's rank more than his father's prejudices. Condé and Coligny set

up the Huguenot standard at Rochelle, and were there joined by vast numbers of Protestants, and by the young Prince of Navarre, with 3000 of his subjects. It was now winter, and though the armies lay in close proximity, they were prevented by the severity of the weather from coming to any general engagement. Mutual pillage and cruelties too revolting for detail, formed the only employment of the soldiery; and it was not till the spring time that a regular battle took place. On the 13th of March, 1569, they met at last upon the banks of the Charente, near Jarnac. The Catholics numbered 26,000 men, and the Huguenots only 15,000. Condé, wounded the evening before, carried his arm in a sling, and, before the battle had well begun, had his leg broken by a kick from a vicious horse. "Now, ye French nobles," he said, smiling down his pain, "here is the combat ye have desired so long. Charge, and remember in what state Louis de Bourbon fights for Christ and his country!" They rushed forward, fought desperately, were overwhelmed by superior numbers, and at last put to flight. Thrown from his horse and left in the rear, Condé, though fallen, defended himself in the midst of his enemies. He was then forced to yield himself prisoner, and was laid under the shade of a tree, when a captain in the Duke of Anjou's guards came up behind, and basely shot him dead with his pistol. The great Protestant hero was at this time scarcely thirty-nine years of age, and in him the cause of the reformers lost one of the bravest and noblest of its defenders. The Court now exulted in its triumph, and the Huguenots were almost in despair, when Jeanne d'Albret, the lofty and courageous Queen of Navarre, appeared in their camp, accompanied by her son Henry, Prince of Béarn, and by Prince Henry of Condé, son to their late leader. These youths were both just sixteen years of age, and swore to defend the Protestant cause till death or victory should end the struggle. The Prince of Béarn was then proclaimed general-in-chief, under the direction of Coligny, and first distinguished himself at the battle of La Roche Abeille, where the Catholics were defeated and slaughtered without quarter. The battle of

Moncontour was next fought with a precisely contrary result, and the rest of the year 1569 passed away in petty sieges and encounters which only served to show both parties the impossibility of ever reducing either by the mere force of arms. A treaty of peace was at length proposed. Protestants and Catholics alike needed repose. The veteran Coligny, weary of shedding the blood of his countrymen, listened gladly to the proposals of the Court; and Charles, with the plan of a dark vengeance at his heart, proffered terms of the most favourable and flattering description. Rochelle, Montauban, Cognac, and La Charité were accorded to the Huguenots to fortify as they might think proper. Prince Henry of Béarn was to marry Margaret, sister to the king. Coligny was to have the command of an army, for the purpose of recovering from Spain the ancient fief of Flanders. Strange to say, the Protestant leaders, instead of mistrusting this unheard-of condescension, suffered themselves to be deceived, accepted smiles as the guarantees of peace, and repaired to Paris to ratify the treaty. In the midst of the bridal preparations, the Queen of Navarre, who had ventured to accompany her son, died suddenly. It was supposed that her death was caused by a pair of poisoned gloves furnished to her by Catharine's Italian perfumer; but of the truth of this suspicion history affords no proof. On the 18th of August, 1572, the ill-omened marriage took place, and Henry, in consequence of the death of his mother, assumed the title of King of Navarre. Banquets, masquerades, and entertainments of the utmost splendour followed the ceremony. The Court seemed to be absorbed in gaiety. The Huguenots were overwhelmed with civilities; and Coligny, despite the remonstrances of his party, persisted in remaining fearlessly in Paris. On the 22nd of August, as he was slowly returning from the Louvre to his hotel, reading some papers by the way, he was fired at from behind a grated window in the cloisters of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. He was conveyed home, wounded in two places; and the assassin, who was proved to be a servant of the Duke of Guise, confessed that

he had been stationed there for two days with his arquebuse. Upon this, Catharine and Charles went to visit the Admiral at the Hotel Ponthieu; expressed the utmost concern; left him a guard of honour, as if for protection; and gave orders that, with only two exceptions, the city gates should be closed. They then procured a list of all the Protestants of Paris, and prepared the Swiss guards and the city militia for their part in the coming slaughter. For two days all was quiet; but on Saturday, the 23rd of August, it was decided that the signal should be given at daybreak. It was then the Eve of St. Bartholomew. As the hour approached, the king was seized with violent tremors, and the perspiration poured from his forehead. His mother and brother with difficulty prevented him from countering all that had been arranged, and he expressly detained the Prince of Condé and the King of Navarre within the precincts of the Louvre, that they might escape the general destruction. As the young Count de la Rochefoucault took his leave that evening, the king laid his hand upon his sleeve, and entreated him also to remain in the palace for the night. The count excused himself; and Charles, who entertained a real regard for him, was forced to let him go, for fear of awakening suspicion. Thus the night wore on, and all was wakeful in the Louvre, in the guard-houses, and in the Hotel de Ville. The rest of the city was wrapt in profound repose. At half-past one o'clock in the morning, while it was yet dark, the great bell of the palace began to toll, and then the tocsin of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. The streets were suddenly filled with armed men, all of whom wore a white cross on their hats, and a scarf on the left arm; and presently, as the Duke of Anjou relates, the first pistol-shot was heard. Guise and his party went straight to the Hotel Ponthieu, shouting, "To death! to death!" and forced the doors open in the name of the king. The soldiers rushed up-stairs; but the duke, unable to face his victim, remained below. They found an old man at prayer in an upper room. "Art thou Coligny?" asked one, who bore a drawn sword in his hand. "I am," he re-

plied calmly. "Young man, respect these grey hairs." The soldier made no reply, but plunged his sword several times into the admiral's body, and threw it out of the window to Henry de Guise, who trampled it savagely beneath his feet. In every street, almost in every house, the same scene was repeated. Excepting those who wore some Catholic emblem, none were spared. Not even women, or little children. Starting from sleep in the dreary daybreak, half clothed, frantic with terror, they came out of their houses at the sound of the tocsin, and were slain by thousands. Many were butchered in their beds. Teligny, who had married the admiral's daughter, was shot on the tiles of his house. A Huguenot, pursued in the very precincts of the palace, fled to the apartments of the King of Navarre, and flung himself into the royal bed where Margaret was lying alone. She sprang up with the fugitive clinging to her, and her night-clothes deluged with his blood, and succeeded in saving him from the archers in pursuit. One poor boy, who was concealed by the fallen bodies of his murdered parents, escaped, and became in after-life a marshal of France. As the morning dawned, the king, who had by this time recovered his presence of mind, called for his long fowling-piece and fired on the Protestants from a window of the Louvre overlooking the Seine; and the queen-mother, with the ladies of her court, came out to look at the heap of slain in the quadrangle of the palace. The citizens rivalled the nobles in their ferocity, and it is supposed that more than five thousand persons were massacred in Paris alone. The slaughter went on uninterruptedly for three days, and did not entirely cease till a week was over. On the third day the king went in state to Parliament, avowed the deed, and was applauded by the judges for his zeal in the cause of Rome. Royal orders were then forwarded through the provinces for the renewal of the massacre, and forty-five thousand more victims were sacrificed. Some few governors, however, refused to obey, and even the public executioner of a certain town declared himself incapable of becoming an assassin. Such was the massacre of

St. Bartholomew, terribly famous in the annals of history. Philip of Spain welcomed the intelligence with unbounded joy, and the pope (Gregory XIII.) celebrated it as a jubilee, with a special mass and the firing of cannon. But Elizabeth of England testified her solemn disapproval, and received the French ambassador in an apartment hung with black, and in the presence of a Court attired in the deepest mourning.

The king and his mother had anticipated as the result of these crimes, a reign of submission and the termination of the civil wars. But they were deceived. The Huguenots, utterly desperate, flew to arms; the war broke out with greater fury than before; and the Protestant ranks were reinforced by vast numbers of Catholics, who, in mere disgust of the massacre, embraced the tenets of the Reformation. Rochelle was now besieged by the Duke of Anjou, but was defended with so much obstinacy that the assailants found it expedient to negotiate; and a fourth peace was signed on the 6th of July, 1573. The queen had in the meantime, at an enormous outlay, secured the election of the Duke of Anjou to the crown of Poland. No sooner was he gone, however, than she repented of the step and would fain have recalled him to St. Germain; for it became evident that the throne of France must soon be vacant. Ever since the fatal day of St. Bartholomew, the king's health had declined. He was a prey to tortures of delirious remorse, to burning fever, and to visions in which he beheld rivers of blood and the spectres of those whom he had sacrificed. While in this state, he was still further disturbed by an attempt at flight, made by the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé. The Duke d'Alençon, youngest son of Catharine de Medicis, joined with them in the enterprise, and, being discovered in time, was apprehended and imprisoned with the King of Navarre. Condé alone succeeded in accomplishing his escape. Lamole and Coonas, who had aided the plot, were both executed, and the Marshals of Cossé and Montmorency consigned to the Bastile. Just at this juncture, Charles IX., after a reign of

thirteen years, died at the age of twenty-four, on the 30th of May, 1574.

Henry III., King of Poland and Duke of Anjou, fled like a deserter from his new dominions, left Cracow secretly in the night, and hastened towards Paris. He seemed, however, more anxious to abandon than to assume the duties of a sovereign; for he lingered in Germany and Italy by the way, revelling in his temporary liberty, and, as it were, dreading the restraints and ceremonies of a Court. After a delay of four months, he arrived in the month of September at Lyons, and began his reign by exhibiting himself in a ridiculous procession at Avignon, where, with the queen-mother, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and a number of courtiers, he walked barefooted through the streets with a crucifix in one hand and a whip in the other. This prince, who had shown considerable military talent and personal courage some few years before, had become, at twenty-three years of age, careless, cruel, dissipated, and frivolous. He passed his time in buffooneries of the most licentious nature; in the extreme practices of a contemptible superstition; in grave councils which had for their object the invention of new fashions; and in the society of dissolute women, still more dissolute men, priests, dogs, paroquets, and monkeys. And now, shocked to see upon the throne the man who had been most conspicuous for bloodshed during the days of the massacre, the Huguenots rose again in great force, and war broke out afresh. In the month of September, 1575, the Duke of Alençon escaped to the Protestant camp, and in the succeeding February was followed by the King of Navarre. The confederates had already been joined by the Elector Palatine, with a large body of troops, and their numbers were so formidable that Henry III. was glad to sign a truce upon terms which filled the Catholic party with dismay. These latter, believing their own religion in danger, next formed themselves into a league, headed by the brilliant, ambitious, and unscrupulous Henry, Duke of Guise. This nobleman was the idol of the Parisians, and now, under the mask of loyalty, aspired even to the crown of France. Herein he was sup-

ported not only by the members of the League, but by Philip II. of Spain and Pope Gregory XIII., who saw in him a new Hugh Capet, and in Henry a second Louis V. The plot was thus matured, and thus supported, when it came to the king's ears in the latter part of the year 1576. Roused at once from his luxurious apathy, this frivolous sovereign became on a sudden resolute, sagacious, and adroit. He summoned the states-general at Blois in the month of December, and addressed them in a speech full of sense and dignity. Instead of combating the League he published it, subscribed to it, and declared himself its chief; thus depriving Guise of all pretext for disloyalty. He frustrated, one by one, all the designs of his enemies—granted fresh liberties to the Protestant party—condemned the massacre in a speech from the throne—and then, having shown that he could be both prudent and active, plunged back again into a vortex of crime and dissipation. By this time the Duke of Alençon, won back again by the blandishments of his mother, had received, as the price of his reconciliation, the dukedom of Anjou. He was a prince of weak and inconsistent character, vain, ambitious, and fickle. Being entrusted by the Flemings with the defence of the Belgic Liberties against the power of Spain, he played them false and fled back to France. He then made overtures to obtain the hand of Elizabeth of England, and, failing in all his projects, died disappointed and unregretted on the 10th of June, 1584. This event, by leaving the King of Navarre heir to the crown of France, inspired the Huguenots with hope and the Catholics with apprehension. The members of the League entered into communication with Philip of Spain, and in the month of February, 1585, concluded a treaty with that monarch, who took upon himself the title of Protector of the League, and engaged to oppose the succession of Navarre. In 1587 was fought the battle of Coutras, in which Henry of Navarre, who now began to display his great talents, signally defeated the Catholic army under the Duke de Joyeuse. In 1588 the Prince of Condé died. In him the Protestants experienced as great a loss as when his gallant

father was taken from them. Henry III. had by this time lost all the respect of his people, who, indignant at his shameless follies, compared his character with that of their idol, the Duke of Guise. That artful noble was not slow to take advantage of their preference. He promoted the disaffection of the populace by means of his agents, and on the 9th of May, 1588, entered Paris in defiance of the king, who had forbidden him to approach the capital. He was welcomed with transports of joy, and even met by the queen-mother with some show of pretended cordiality; but by Henry he was received with reproaches and indignation, and narrowly escaped from the interview with his life. Next day the king, resolved to defend his authority, posted four thousand Swiss in various parts of the city; but the citizens assembled in vast multitudes, overpowered the soldiers, and erected barricades in all the principal thoroughfares. The king fled to Chartres, and the Duke of Guise found himself master of the city. He now hoped to follow up his advantages by seizing upon the crown, but, the revolt once over, it became evident that even the Parisians wished to treat with Henry, and obtain, not his resignation, but the ratification of their demands. Guise, accordingly, demanded that the states-general should be convoked, and that he should himself receive the office of lieutenant-general of the kingdom. The king consented; and the states met at Blois on the 16th of October, 1588. They showed themselves favourable to the Guise party on all occasions; and the king determined to rid himself of his dangerous subject. During the night of the 22nd of December he concealed nine of his body-guard in the passage leading to his own apartment in the Castle of Blois, and early on the morning of the 23rd summoned the duke to his presence. As he ascended the stairs leading to the council chamber, the officers of the guard surrounded him, petitioning favours, and so kept off his personal followers. He entered alone. The council had assembled; but Guise, it is said, felt a misgiving as the door closed behind him. Still, when called to the royal cabinet, he promptly obeyed, and was in the act of put-

ting aside the tapestry when he was attacked from behind, pierced by a number of poniards, and, after a short but desperate resistance, despatched. At the same moment the Cardinal de Guise was arrested in the council chamber, and shortly afterwards assassinated in his prison. No sooner were these crimes known in Paris than the people became frantic with indignation. Whole provinces revolted. The priests fulminated against Henry all the threats and terrors of the Church. The doctors of the Sorbonne declared him to have forfeited the crown, and absolved the people of their allegiance. Spain sent aid; and an army commanded by the Duke de Mayenne, marched against Tours. At this juncture, almost forgotten amid the perils of the state and the excitement of the Court, died Catharine de Medicis, to whose political and maternal influence most of the miseries which had accumulated since the days of Francis I. may fairly be attributed. Driven to extremity on finding the whole Catholic party in arms against him, Henry was now forced to turn for help to the Huguenots, whom he had persecuted, and the King of Navarre. This prince, after some hesitation, consented at length to befriend his former enemy, and a reconciliation took place between them on the 30th of April, 1589. Henry then assembled all of his soldiers who were yet faithful, and, uniting his army with that of the Protestants, marched upon Paris with 38,000 men. Alarm and rage now alternately distracted the Parisians. The Duke de Mayenne with his small force was unequal to the protection of the capital, and nothing but destruction seemed to be impending. Just at this crisis an event occurred which averted all civil calamities and turned the tide of politics and fate. On the 1st of August, 1589, a fanatical monk named Jacques Clement, repaired alone to the Huguenot camp, with the resolution of slaying the murderer of the Guises. He entreated permission to speak with the king, was admitted to the royal pavilion, and, kneeling down, presented a petition. As Henry opened the paper, the assassin drew a knife from his sleeve and stabbed him in the body. The king uttered a cry of pain

and rage, plucked the weapon from the wound, and struck Clement on the head. The attendants rushed in—the monk was instantly despatched—and the king was succoured by his physicians. The injury was at first supposed to be unimportant, but it became evident, on the following day, that its effects would be mortal. Henry then sent for the King of Navarre, embraced him with every demonstration of regard, acknowledged him as his successor, and so died. This was on the 2nd of August, A.D. 1589. The king was then thirty-eight, and had reigned for fifteen years. He left no children, and with him the House of Valois, which had ruled in France during more than two centuries and a half, became extinct. Of the thirteen monarchs of this line, it may be said that they were for the most part lovers of the fine arts, warriors, and politicians. They expelled the English; they added to their dominions, Dauphiny, Brittany, Burgundy, and Provence; and they suppressed the feudal system. On the other hand, they were, with few exceptions, careless of the prosperity of their people; despotic in taxation; and lovers of power rather than of peace.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF HENRY IV. TO THE DEATH OF LOUIS XIV.
(A.D. 1589—1715.)

HENRY IV. ascended the throne at a period when thirty-six years of domestic warfare had weakened the resources of the kingdom, shaken the power of the sovereign, and depressed the credit and dignity of France. For her the century now drawing to a close had been productive more of trouble than prosperity; and in proportion as the neighbouring monarchies of Europe had increased in wealth and dominion, so had the strength of the inheritance of Charlemagne declined. Spain had now attained “the highest point of all her greatness,” and the lavish treasures of a New World were poured at the feet of her sovereign. England was fast rising into a dignity

that had been little anticipated by the kings of France when William of Normandy first descended, sword in hand, upon the coasts of Sussex. Her conquests were considerable; her commerce was already extensive; and her fleets assumed the sovereignty of the seas. The Dutch, strong in their love of independence, their religious unity, and their habits of industry, became a formidable power; and, entrenched amid their dykes and sandbanks, defied alike the ambition of their enemies and the encroachments of the ocean. Surrounded by these powerful neighbours, it is almost surprising that France, disabled as she was by interior convulsions, should have retained her independence when she lost her political influence. Europe was, as it were, geographically divided into Protestantism and Romanism; the Reformation being established in the northern states, and Catholicism reigning towards the south. But France was divided against herself—Rochelle against Beaugency, Orleans against Bourges, Paris against Rouen. Fathers were at enmity with their sons; and brothers, meeting face to face upon the battle-field, fought as strangers. Every man mistrusted his neighbour; and in the bosoms of even the most charitable smouldered something of that fire which burst forth in fury and was quenched in blood on the day of St. Bartholomew. For Henry IV., then, it was reserved to restore to his country the blessings of peace, civil order, and mutual toleration. That he devoted himself earnestly to his task, and that he fulfilled it worthily, is sufficiently proved by the events of his reign.

It would be difficult to name any sovereign who succeeded to the crown under circumstances more perplexing than Henry of Navarre. Arrayed against him he beheld the members of the League, the anathemas of Rome, and the legions of Spain. Half of his army abandoned him upon the death of Henry III., refusing to acknowledge a Huguenot king; and the Duke de Mayenne, brother to Henry de Guise, took the command of Paris and the army of the League. Finding it hopeless under these disadvantages to continue the siege of the capital, Henry retired into Normandy; and, being fol-

lowed thither by Mayenne, won a signal victory at Arques on the 23rd of September, and another at Ivry, on the 13th of March, 1590. He then returned to the siege of Paris. By this time the old Cardinal de Bourbon, who had been proclaimed by the League under the title of Charles X., died, and the parliament and the Duke de Mayenne held all the power of the Catholic party. Unprepared for a blockade, wanting provisions, ammunition, and arms, the Parisians, nevertheless, resolved to endure all the horrors of famine sooner than surrender. It appears, indeed, that Paris was at this time more averse to Protestantism than any other city in France. Commanded by the Duke de Nemours, animated by the assurances of the Spanish envoy, and sustained by the presence of the pope's legate, the citizens bore up against fearful privations; and, when so reduced that they must have capitulated in a few days more, were relieved by the Duke of Parma with an army of Spanish soldiers. Hereupon the king was forced to raise the siege. His next enterprise was to blockade Rouen, whence he was again dislodged by the same general. It now became evident that no Protestant need hope to reign in France, and Henry, whose religious principles had never been inflexible, determined to adopt the Roman Catholic faith. On the 25th of July, 1593, he made a solemn abjuration at the church of St. Denis, and from this time forth nothing but success attended him. Day after day the nobles flocked to tender their allegiance; Paris opened its gates and received him with acclamations; the pope gave him absolution; and on the 27th of February, 1594, he was crowned in state at Rheims. The members of the League, having no grounds for rebellion left, pledged themselves to allegiance, and the Duke de Mayenne was treated by the king with so generous a forgiveness that he became one of the most loyal of his subjects. Peace being now established at home, Henry found no difficulty in carrying on the war which was declared against him by Spain. He entered into an alliance with England and Holland, and after an obstinate siege of six months, recovered Amiens from the Spanish troops. He

shortly afterwards concluded with Philip the treaty of Vervius, by which Picardy and Calais were restored to the crown of France. This treaty was signed on the 2nd of May, 1598, and before six months were past, Philip III. had succeeded his father on the throne of Spain. Previous to the conclusion of peace abroad, Henry, by the famous edict known as the edict of Nantes, had satisfied the just claims of the Huguenot party, and secured to them freedom of worship, impartial judicature, and the possession of a certain number of fortified towns. The parliament, after a lengthened opposition, consented to sanction and register this important decree, and henceforth the king devoted himself to the promotion of agriculture, commerce, and the arts. The sagacious Sully, being placed at the head of the financial department, administered the revenue with honesty and frugality. The condition of the peasantry was ameliorated. The manufacture of stuffs and tapestries received increased encouragement, and the mulberry-tree was extensively cultivated for the benefit of the silk trade. Paris was enlarged and embellished; the Place Royale was built; the Pont Neuf was completed; and additions were made to the Louvre and Tuileries. The manufacture of glass was commenced. Public highways were repaired, and new roads constructed. The canal of Briare was begun. Above all, the king and his minister punished and exposed the frauds of former governments, and suppressed as much as possible the abuses that had crept into the public offices. The French may now be said to have enjoyed contentment and protection for the first time since the death of Louis XII. Henry IV. became the most popular of sovereigns, and, despite some venial weaknesses of character, was unquestionably the most honourable and humane. In 1599, having obtained a divorce from his unworthy queen, Marguerite de Valois, he married Mary de Medicis, niece to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, with whom, in consequence of her violent temper, he led but an uneasy life. In the year 1600, a war with Savoy, which terminated to the honour of the French arms, brought some accession of territory to the crown, be-

traying at the same time the infidelity of Maréchal Biron, who was found guilty of a treasonable correspondence with the Spanish government, and an understanding with the Duke of Savoy. Up to this time he had been one of Henry's most faithful officers, and even now the king was desirous to pardon him. But Biron refused to confess, and on the 31st of July, 1602, was publicly beheaded. During the eight years that followed, peace and plenty reigned with Henry IV., and, save some few Court troubles, and some love-affairs on the part of the king, no important events took place. National improvements, negotiations, festivals, and hunting parties bring up this reign to the year 1609, when Henry committed the gravest error of his reign, and embroiled his kingdom for the sake of an unworthy passion. Distractedly in love with Mademoiselle de Montmorency, whom he had himself bestowed in marriage on the Prince of Condé, he showed himself so unable to master his inclinations, that the prince, taking alarm for his honour, fled to the Netherlands, and claimed the protection of the Archduke Albert. Henry was furious with rage and disappointment, and, contrary to the advice of Sully, demanded the restoration of the fugitives. Condé then went on to Germany; his wife remained at Brussels under the protection of the arch-duchess; and Henry, amid the indignant surprise of the European powers, declared war against Spain and Austria. That the king had long meditated an attack upon the too-extensive power of those countries availed him nothing in the opinion of the world, which beheld in this step only the prosecution of a private vengeance, and condemned in him a second Paris in pursuit of a new Helen. Sensible of his fault, irritated by the scandal to which his conduct had given rise, and oppressed by an indefinable melancholy, he hastened his preparations, and arranged to open the campaign by an attack on Flanders. Before his departure, however, the queen, whom he had entrusted with the office of regent, desired to be crowned, and the ceremony took place on the 13th of May, 1610. It was observed that the king seemed to be overwhelmed by sadness on this occasion, as if possessed

by a presentiment of his fate. On the 14th his dejection had so far increased as to alarm his friends and attendants, and he was advised by the captain of his guard to try the benefit of the air. His coach was called accordingly, and he went to pay a visit to Sully, then lying ill. In the Rue de la Ferronnerie the carriage was stopped by a couple of carts, and at that moment a man sprang on the step, leaned into the vehicle, and stabbed the king in two places. He sank back instantly, and expired with a sigh; the assassin was seized with the knife in his hand; and the lifeless body was borne back, followed by the shrieks and tears of the people. Never had a king been so beloved in France, or so lamented. All kinds of work ceased, and every trade was suspended. The murderer, a half-bewildered fanatic named Ravillac, narrowly escaped being torn in pieces by the mob; and the roads were thronged by folks from the country, anxiously inquiring if it were indeed true that their good king was slain. Such was the end of Henry IV., surnamed by some the Great, and by some the Father of his People. He was at this time in the fifty-seventh year of his age, and the twenty-second of his reign.

Louis XIII. was not yet nine years of age, and Mary de Medicis, as queen-regent, succeeded to all the power of royalty. She was a woman of weak yet imperious character, and was wholly governed by an Italian favourite named Concini, and his wife, Leonora de Galigai. Upon Concini the queen bestowed a marshal's baton, with the title of Marquis d'Ancre, and to both she gave unlimited confidence. In such hands, and under such circumstances, it is not surprising that the fabric of prosperity and wealth so lately raised should fall rapidly to decay. Civil dissensions, discontent on the part of the people, and ambition on the part of the aristocracy, ensued. The Court became a nest of political intrigues, and the nobility, who had of late acquired a degree of independence almost rivalling the petty sovereignties of the feudal system, increased the taxes, levied imposts, exacted tolls, and conferred letters of nobility. The great Sully, finding his counsels disregarded, and his position usurped by adventurers,

retired from Court, and resided upon his estates during the remainder of his life; and the Duke de Mayenne, who was a man of high integrity, died at the very time when loyalty and truth were most needed round the throne. It was the policy of the queen-regent, being herself a bigoted Catholic, to ally as closely as possible the interests of France and Spain; and in the year 1612, two royal marriages were announced—one between the young king, Louis XIII., and the infanta, Anne of Austria, daughter to the King of Spain; and the other between the Princess Elizabeth, sister of Louis, and the prince of Spain, afterwards Philip IV. These marriages were strenuously opposed by the Protestant party, headed by the Prince of Condé; but took place, nevertheless, on the 18th of October, 1615. The king, being now fourteen years of age, attained his majority, and began to manifest some inclination for the power as well as the insignia of royalty. His mother, however, still contrived to retain the reins of power, and a war, which never came to an engagement, broke out between the Protestant and Catholic factions. At length Louis, instigated by a courtier named De Luynes, determined no longer to suffer the arrogance and ambition of the Concini. The marshal now maintained at his own expense an army of 6,000 men, and, confident of the favour of the queen-mother, conducted himself with insolence towards the youthful sovereign. Vitry, captain of the guard, received the royal orders—the marshal was arrested, and, on the first show of resistance, shot—his wife was cast into prison—and in one day the authority of the queen-mother and the influence of her advisers was annihilated. She retired in grief and indignation to Blois, and after some time removed to Angoulême. She never became entirely reconciled to her son; and, after having once been actually at war with him, died many years later at Cologne, A.D. 1642.

In the meantime, De Luynes, the contriver of this revolution, succeeded in obtaining over Louis an influence similar to that which Concini had exercised over the queen-regent. He was loaded with honours, created a duke, and rewarded

with the confiscated riches of his victim. Assailed, however, by the enmity of the courtiers, the intrigues of Mary, and the treachery of one Armand du Plessis Richelieu, he maintained his position with difficulty, and was more than once threatened with a reverse of fortune. From this he was spared by an early death, in the year 1621; and henceforth the real power of the state may be said to have reverted entirely into the hands of Richelieu. This extraordinary man, who has received from historians so large a measure both of praise and blame, has been, not inaptly, compared with his predecessor, Wolsey of England. Like him, he was a prelate, a minister, a consummate politician, and a master of the arts of intrigue. He gave his whole attention and all his vast abilities to affairs of state, was prodigal of display, and entertained projects of the most towering ambition. He added to his ministerial and priestly dignities the emoluments and honours of the profession of arms; assumed the dress and title of generalissimo of the French army; and wore alternately the helmet of the warrior and the scarlet hat of the cardinal. Richelieu was far more crafty than the minister of Henry VIII., and more unscrupulous. Having been first befriended by Concini, he next attached himself to De Luynes. Quitting De Luynes, he became the adviser of Mary de Medicis; and finally abandoning her and her party, succeeded in rendering himself indispensable to the king, all-powerful in the state, and formidable to those who sought the overthrow of his dignity, or that of the monarch whom he ruled.

Unmindful of the decree of Nantes, which he had confirmed at the beginning of his reign, Louis marched upon his father's ancient patrimony of Béarn in the year 1620, suppressed the privileges of the Huguenots, re-established the Roman Catholic church, and annexed the principality to the crown. Upon this, the Prince of Condé and the Duke de Lesdiguières abandoned the Protestant cause and their companions in arms, the Dukes de Rohan and de Soubise, who were its leaders. In 1621, the king, accompanied by his new allies, attacked

and took the Huguenot fortress of St. Jean d'Angeli; and in 1622, destroyed the army of the Duke de Soubise at the Isle of Rhé, off Poitou. Louis now wished to undertake the siege of Rochelle, the great stronghold of the Protestant party; but was dissuaded from the enterprise by Richelieu, who drew his attention to a new and pressing danger then threatening the Alpine frontiers, where the Italian States, under pretext of an alliance with Savoy, were contending with Spain for possession of the Valteline. A treaty with Philip shortly after concluded this dispute, and a league against England was formed between France and Spain. This league, however, was productive of no results beyond exciting the enmity of Charles I., and securing to the Rochellers the assistance of an English fleet. This fleet, under the command of the Duke of Buckingham, appeared before the city on the 20th of July, 1627. Influenced by some fatal indecision, or perhaps by a hope of reconciliation with the king, the mayor and council forbade the entrance of their allies. The fleet and its succours withdrew, and shortly afterwards the blockade of the city was begun. Richelieu then deprived them of all hope of again receiving help by sea. He constructed a gigantic dyke across the harbour; invested the walls by land; and had the satisfaction of seeing an English fleet, commanded by the Earl of Lindsay, sail up, cannonade in vain, and finally abandon the enterprise. At length, after an entire year of resistance, Rochelle was forced to submit. Famine and despair had reduced the city to horrible extremities. Out of fifteen thousand souls only four thousand survived to behold the day of capitulation; and when Louis entered the gates on the 1st of November, 1628, the streets were strewn with bodies which the living were too weak to bury. The city lost its municipal privileges; but the king permitted its inhabitants the free exercise of their religion. Singular to relate, a violent tempest arose on the day following the king's entry, raged for the space of one week with unabated fury, and ended by washing away that fatal dyke which had proved the ruin of Rochelle. Nismes, Montauban, and several other Huguenot

cities surrendered in the course of the following year, and from this time forth the Protestants were dependent upon the mercy of the crown. The civil wars ended, it now became the policy of Richelieu to engage France in enterprises abroad, and for this purpose he persuaded the king to espouse the cause of the Duke de Nevers, whose principalities of Mantua and Montferrat were then threatened by the Duke of Savoy, assisted by the arms and counsels of Spain. In this step the great minister was not entirely guided by those interested motives which frequently led him to plunge the king into embarrassments in order to enhance the value of his own services. Next to his personal aggrandizement, the cardinal laboured faithfully for that of his country, and he believed it indispensable to the safety as well as to the honour of the monarchy, that every surrounding state should be humbled and subjected. Above all, he sought to reduce the power of Austria and Spain. An expedition was accordingly undertaken. Richelieu, superbly armed, placed himself at the head of 40,000 men, and accompanied by the king and the queen-mother, who had for the time effected a reconciliation with her son, marched into Savoy, forced the pass of Susa, and conquered the Mantuan territories. For a long period the cardinal and the queen-mother had been perpetually at strife. They both loved power, and their efforts to dislodge each other were unceasing. Mary feared and hated Richelieu; Richelieu hated and despised Mary; and the feeble Louis was the slave of both. Sometimes he listened to the complaints and intrigues of his mother; but he was always governed by the indomitable will of the great minister. Often, at the very moment when the queen, amid her little Court at the Luxembourg, was exulting in the supposed downfall of her enemy, that politic prelate was closeted with the king at Versailles, exposing the selfishness and weakness of her manœuvres, and establishing more firmly than ever his own dominion over the mind and actions of his royal pupil. It was in the year 1631, shortly after the termination of the war in Savoy, that their long contest came to an issue,

and Louis consented to have his mother arrested at Compiègne. Hence she escaped, aided by her second son, Gaston, Duke of Orleans. This prince shared her hatred of the prime-minister, and was then labouring under the displeasure of the king. Mary fled to Flanders, the duke went to Lorraine, and Richelieu was left in possession of the field, to confiscate the wealth of the queen-mother, and to foment the indignation of the king against his brother's protector and father-in-law, the Duke of Lorraine. In 1633, Louis marched an army in pursuit of the Duke of Orleans, and caused his marriage with Margaret of Lorraine to be annulled by the parliament — a decree, however, to which the newly-married pair paid little regard, since the validity of their union was recognised by the Court of Rome. Nancy, the capital of Lorraine, was next besieged, and the duke, unable to resist, capitulated with the loss of his independence. Orleans then effected a reconciliation with his brother, and returned to Court. In the year 1636, began a tedious war with Spain and Austria, which lasted for thirteen years against the former, and for twenty-five against the latter. The preparations made by Richelieu for this undertaking were in proportion to its magnitude. He prepared four armies for the prosecution of the war in Flanders, the Rhenish provinces, Italy, and the Valteline. He concluded alliances with Holland and Sweden, with the Swiss, the Dukes of Savoy and Parma, the Duke of Saxe Weimar, and the Prince of Orange. Notwithstanding all this, the war was productive of little more than frontier skirmishes and languid sieges, and brought no great glory or profit to the crown of France. The campaigns opened disastrously enough. The Spaniards, on the side of the Pyrenees, possessed themselves of the town of St. Jean de Luz—the Marshal de Chatillion was forced to raise the siege of Louvain—the Infant of Spain invaded Champagne with forty thousand men; and the town of Corbie was taken. On receipt of this fatal news, Louis and his people alike desponded.

Richelieu's good fortune seemed to have deserted him, and Paris was thrown into despair. The cardinal, however,

proved himself as great in adversity as in success. He dismissed his guards to the scene of action. He called upon the wealthy for their horses and servants. He summoned the poorer classes to fight for the safety of their country. A reinforcement of fifty thousand men was by these means assembled. The command was entrusted to the Count de Soissons and the Duke of Orleans. Corbie was besieged and retaken, and the Spaniards were compelled to retreat. Fresh plots were now laid for the destruction of Richelieu. Soissons and Orleans united to compass his death, and it was agreed that the cardinal should be assassinated at Amiens. Unconscious of his danger, he left the council-chamber, passed down the staircase, and stood waiting for his carriage in the midst of the conspirators. But Orleans, who was to have given the signal, quailed before the magnitude of the crime, and, when it came to the moment, dared not shed the blood of so noble a man, a cardinal, an archbishop, and a priest. Alarmed at the probable consequences of discovery, the count fled to Sedan, and Orleans to Blois—but the latter was soon forgiven and brought back to Court: only to conspire again in the year 1641, and again receive pardon. His associates on the last occasion, were, however, put to death, and the duke himself purchased life at the price of honour, by informing against them. During all this time the war with Spain had been going on at many points of the Pyrenean frontier; but chiefly in the territory of Savoy. Of the numerous skirmishes and engagements which occurred to raise or depress the hopes of both nations, it would be impossible, in so limited a space as the present, to give anything more than a general idea. On the whole, the French may be said to have acquired a gradual success—although that success was not at any time of a nature materially to influence the fortunes of the war. A revolt in Catalonia gave to Louis, in 1642, a new opening to attack the power of his enemy. An army was assembled, and the king, marching in person to the aid of the insurgents, besieged and took Perpignan. Louis had this time to act alone, for Richelieu was detained by illness at Narbonne.

Later in the year, he was removed to Paris. No oriental monarch could have traversed his dominions with more show of omnipotence than did the haughty cardinal, dying as he was. He was borne by his guards in a litter so large and splendid that it might more properly be called a furnished apartment; and, as he passed through towns and cities on his way, he commanded all those gates which were not wide enough for his entrance to be pulled down. Once arrived at the capital, his pride and vindictiveness increased with his waning strength. He exiled some of the king's most valued officers and friends. The queen came to visit him, and he received her, seated. He conducted himself towards Louis as one great potentate in the presence of another, and even forbade his guards to salute the king with military honours. At length, as the month of December approached, it became evident that he could not live for many days. He then summoned Louis to his bedside, recapitulated the splendid acts of his administration, and recommended Cardinal Mazarin, whom he had of late favoured and brought forward, as worthy to succeed him. The king promised compliance, and Richelieu, after lingering for a few days more, expired on the 4th of December, 1642. The queen-mother had preceded her ancient enemy to the grave not many months before, and Louis followed him on the 14th of May, 1643. Thus, within the short space of thirteen months, died the three great personages of this strange drama. The queen-mother, a weak and selfish woman, claims from us at least that questionable approval which is granted to perseverance in even a doubtful cause; but Louis is a mere phantom in the scene—a *fainéant* weak as any of the later Merovingians, and ruled by a subject more imperious than Pepin or Charles Martel. Richelieu alone usurps all the honour, all the power, all the prosperity of more than twenty years. He it was who consolidated the famous system of the balance of power—who organized the great military strength of France—who created the royal navy—who added Alsatia, Rousillon, Sedan, Arras, Turin, Catalonia, and Lorraine to the dominions of the crown—and

who, having subdued the Huguenots, and humbled the pride of the great house of Austria, died at last, leaving to Paris more monuments of his liberality than were erected by any of her sovereigns, and to posterity a name more imposing than honoured—more brilliant than beloved.

Louis XIV., the son of his father's later life, was but five years of age when he succeeded to the throne, under the regency of his mother, Anne of Austria. This queen suffered herself to be ruled by Cardinal Mazarin, an Italian *prêtre*, educated in the political school of his great predecessor. The Duke d'Enghien, afterwards the "great Condé," was commanding an army in Flanders at the period of the infant king's accession, and signalized the very opening of the new reign by the brilliant victory of Rocroi (May 19th, 1643)—by taking Thionville—and by carrying the war into Germany. In August, 1644, he fought another battle at Friburg, took Philipsburg and Mentz, and, returning to Paris at the close of the campaign, left the command to Marshal Turenne. This general, having been surprised and defeated at Mariendahl, May, 1645, the duke hastened back, and won another great victory, at Nordlingen, on the 3rd of the following August. The Duke of Orleans had, in the meantime, reduced Gravelines and Mardyke, and on the 10th of October, 1646, the valuable harbour of Dunkirk surrendered to D'Enghien, in sight of the Spanish army. At the latter end of this year, the Prince of Condé died, and his victorious son succeeded to the title. In 1648 the Austrian archduke Leopold entered Flanders with an army of eighteen thousand men, and recovered some of the victories of the preceding campaigns. The great Condé was sent to oppose him, and took Ypres. He then marched to the relief of Sens, which, to his great mortification, surrendered in his sight; but all was retrieved by a great battle fought on the plains before the city—a victory which decided the superiority of the French, brought increased glory to the young general, and finally ended the thirty years' war. On the 24th of October, 1648, was signed the peace of Westphalia, by which many

important places were ceded to France, and the independence of the Dutch provinces secured.

The unpopularity of Mazarin was at this time the source of many domestic troubles, and the arbitrary measures which he was forced to adopt for obtaining supplies during these long and expensive wars, brought upon him the opposition of the parliament and the hatred of the people. Public riots ensued. The streets were barricaded, and the chancellor and his suite attacked on their way to the senate house. These disturbances were fomented by the profligate and turbulent Cardinal de Retz, and, somehow, came to be commonly called the *Fronde*,* and those who partook in them the *Frondeurs*. The barricades were erected on the 26th of August, 1648, and on the 27th order was again restored. The queen fled, however, to St. Germain with her children, Cardinal Mazarin, the Duke of Orleans, and the Prince of Condé. Exiled thus from the capital, cut off from all pecuniary resources, deserted by most of the nobility, and at enmity with the parliament, the royal party was reduced to absolute privation, compelled to sleep upon straw, and to dismiss the greater part of the customary retinue. The queen even pledged the crown jewels. At last an army was assembled, and Condé invested Paris. A peace being effected in the spring-time of 1649, the Court returned in August to the capital, and the queen became reconciled to De Retz. And now Condé, presuming on his great services, conducted himself with so much arrogance towards the queen and the cardinal, that both grew impatient of the yoke, and resolved to rid themselves of his pretensions. He was therefore arrested at the Palais Royal on the 18th of January, 1650, and imprisoned, first at Vincennes, and then at Havre. In the meantime a formidable league, consisting of many of the great nobility and the whole of the parliament, was formed in favour of Condé. Mazarin found himself the object of universal detestation; was exiled by a decree of the parliament; and from his retreat at Bruhl, beheld Condé restored to liberty in the month of February, 1651. This

* From the verb *fronder*, to censure, or browbeat.

ambitious prince, however, soon created fresh enemies, and found his efforts at domination resisted by the Fronde, the queen, and the people. He retired into Guienne ; roused four provinces to rebellion ; was reinforced by some Spanish regiments ; and compelled the Court, then at Poitiers, to retreat before him. By this time Mazarin, recalled by Anne of Austria, and welcomed by the young king, now almost fourteen years of age, had returned to Court. The parliament set a price upon his head, and the Duke of Orleans, fickle and purposeless as ever, went over with his troops to Condé. Marshal Turenne attached himself to the royal party, and, taking command of the army, fought a battle with Condé at Blenau, and was defeated. Condé then advanced to Paris (April, 1652) and was encountered in the suburbs by Turenne, where an indecisive action took place. The miseries of civil war were now transferred to the capital, and the king, having by this time attained his majority, saw with regret that nothing but the dismissal of Mazarin would suffice to restore tranquillity. The cardinal was then exiled for the second time, on the 12th of August, 1652, and peace was the immediate result. The citizens entreated Louis to return to Paris ; the Duke of Orleans was banished to Blois, whence he returned to trouble the state no more ; Cardinal de Retz was imprisoned ; and Condé, harassed by his former officer, Turenne, and feebly supported by the Spanish arms, was reduced to the prosecution of an unimportant and unsuccessful war on the borders of Champagne. Thus ended the civil contentions of the Fronde ; and henceforth, undisturbed by faction, Louis XIV. commenced in his own person a long and splendid reign. His first act was to attack Condé in Picardy, under the direction of Turenne ; his second to recall Cardinal Mazarin. In both he was successful. The storm of public hate had spent itself, and the obnoxious minister, preceded by the favour of his young and popular sovereign, was received by the city and the people not only with toleration, but with every demonstration of festivity. An alliance concluded with Cromwell in 1655 tended materially to strengthen the position

of the king; but, to effect it, he, unfortunately for his fame, consented to expel from his dominions the royal exiles of England, who then sought an asylum in Spain. Thus the two countries were for a time on terms of friendship; and Turenne, still pursuing the Prince of Condé and his Spanish allies, took from them successively, Mardyke, Dunkirk, Gravelines, Ypres, and various other towns of Flanders. Towards the Italian frontier, the French arms were no less fortunate; and the Court of Spain, weary of reverses, solicited peace. To these advances Mazarin promptly responded, and by the treaty of November, 1659, it was arranged that Louis should retain Alsatia and Rousillon, pardon the Prince of Condé, restore the province of Lorraine to its hereditary duke, and, finally, accept in marriage the hand of his cousin the Infanta Elizabeth, only daughter to King Philip IV. This union was celebrated at St. Jean de Luz, on the Spanish frontier, June 9th, 1660. In the same year died Gaston, Duke of Orleans, and, as he left no heir, the title was given to Philip, the younger brother of Louis, who married Henrietta, sister to Charles II. of England. The following year witnessed the death of Cardinal Mazarin. This ambitious prelate, having been at one time absolute master of the kingdom, left a colossal fortune, and a reputation less honourable than that of his great model and predecessor, Cardinal Richelieu. Negligent of the interests of the country, and ever wakeful to his own; unscrupulous in the employment of means and the pursuit of ends; devoid of patriotism; and entertaining an unjustifiable disdain for the great body of the people, this minister, although his talents excite our admiration, claims little from the affection or respect of posterity. He died on the 9th of March, 1661, and Louis, then not twenty-three years of age, determined to take the administration upon himself. "To whom, sire, shall I in future address myself upon affairs of state?" asked next day Harlai de Chauvallon, president of the assembly of clergy. "*To me,*" replied the king. From that moment till the day of his death Louis XIV. kept his word. He was, to use the language of a French historian, "born with the instinct of

greatness, order, and power." He devoted himself to business. He was methodical, unwearied, and exact. He kept his ministers under strict control. He was at the same time economical and munificent; and, above all, living in an age when men of great talent abounded in France, he had the wisdom to employ them in the service of the state. By this time the magnificent Protectorate of Cromwell had terminated with the death of the great Puritan, and Charles II., with his careless and unkingly notions of royalty, had succeeded to the throne. From him, to the great vexation of the English nation, Louis purchased Dunkirk and Mardyke; and in the year 1665 allied himself with the Dutch, then at enmity with England. This war, remarkable only for the daring with which the Dutch vessels ventured up the Thames, was terminated by the treaty of Breda, A.D. 1667. Before peace was established in one quarter, fresh hostilities began in another. The king, contrary to one of the stipulations of the treaty of 1659, now laid claim, in right of his wife, Elizabeth, to Flanders, Brabant, and Franche Comté, all dependencies of Spain. War was declared, and Louis prepared for action. Thanks to the immense financial genius of his minister, the famous Colbert, France was now possessed of resources more ample than had ever been placed at the disposal of any previous monarch. Magazines of arms were distributed along the frontiers; the young nobility thronged to the royal standard; and within three weeks from the date of their departure, Louis and Turenne had wrested French Flanders from the crown of Spain. In the month of February, 1668, the Prince of Condé, entrusted with the command of another army, reduced the entire province of Franche Comté. The ambition and good fortune of Louis XIV. now began to excite the apprehensions of the other European powers; and the Triple Alliance between England, Holland, and Sweden, which was cemented chiefly by the admirable policy of Sir William Temple, interposed an effectual barrier to the military successes of France. Indignant at the interference of these powers, and particularly offended with Hol-

land, which had hitherto been his stanch ally, the king was, nevertheless, compelled to conclude a peace at Aix-la-Chapelle, May 2nd, 1668; and to restore to Spain the province of Franche Comté. His policy was next directed towards breaking the alliance between England and Holland, and securing the services of the former against the latter, whose defection he had resolved to chastise. The means adopted by him on this occasion evidenced his profound appreciation of character. He induced Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, to visit her brother, and to take with her the beautiful and fascinating Mademoiselle de Kerouailles. This lady, better known as the Duchess of Portsmouth, soon accomplished, by the magic of her charms, all that her royal master of France had desired. Charles consented to the new alliance; the Emperor of Austria and the King of Sweden agreed to maintain a neutrality, and Spain alone remained true to the cause of Holland. In 1672, Louis, at the head of a gigantic army, passed the Rhine and possessed himself of the great provinces of Gueldres, Overyssel, and Utrecht. The brave Dutch, seeing only destruction before them, entreated forbearance and peace; but the conditions upon which it was offered were intolerable, and they determined to resist to the uttermost. Just at this time the stadholdership was conferred upon the Prince of Orange, afterwards William III. of England. This heroic and illustrious man now set himself calmly to oppose the tide of invasion; and, reinforced by an un hoped-for alliance with the Emperor of Austria and the Elector of Brandenburg, soon found himself general of forces no longer inferior to those of France and England. Three indecisive naval battles were fought by Admiral de Ruyter and the Count d'Estrees, in the months of June and August, 1673. Louis then took Maestricht; but the stadholder assisted by the Austrian general, cut off the communication between France and Holland, and compelled the invaders to concentrate their forces, to evacuate the Dutch provinces, and to retreat to France. The English, whose sympathies were with Holland, next forced their king to abandon an alliance which had for its

object the subjugation of a valiant people, and was undertaken in compliance with the basest pecuniary motives. Peace was accordingly concluded between England and Holland on the 9th of February, 1674. Still Louis persevered; and, invading Franche Comté in person, recovered the whole province in the course of six months. Turenne, meanwhile, pursued an uninterrupted course of victories in Alsatia, and cruelly laid waste the fair and fertile Palatinate of the Rhine. Condé, in Flanders, continued to reduce the power of Spain; and the Count de Schomberg, then commanding in Rousillon, effectually defended the Pyrenean frontiers. The scene of the following campaign, in 1675, was chiefly laid amid the principalities of the Rhine. Engaged one day in reconnoitring the neighbourhood of Salzbach, Marshal Turenne was struck by a cannon-ball and killed upon the spot. He was one of the greatest generals of his day, and was at that time sixty-four years of age. At the close of the year the renowned Condé retired from the profession of arms, and passed the brief remainder of his life in his retreat at Chantilly. The Austrian general, Montecuculi, withdrew at the same time, and in the following year fell Admiral de Ruyter, in an action off the coast of Sicily. Deprived thus of the four great heroes who had, by land and sea, divided between them the triumphs of the last thirty years, the war was still sustained with spirit; and France, under new and younger generals, continued her successes. At length, through the mediation of Charles II. (who by the marriage of his niece, Mary, with the Prince of Orange, had entered into an alliance with Holland), a peace was concluded at Nimeguen, in the summer of the year 1679. Especially favourable to the interests of France, this treaty secured to Louis the province of Franche Comté, Alsatia, and many towns in the Low Countries, and raised the Grand Monarque to the summit of his political and military glory. He was at this time the most powerful and the most vain-glorious of European sovereigns; and Colbert beheld with dismay the pride, the prodigality, and the usurpations of his master. His ascendancy was almost fabulous, and he presumed

upon it. Jealous to excess of the dignity of his person as represented in his ambassadors, he relentlessly punished the most unpremeditated offences. An insult preluded an invasion, and a breach of etiquette was the signal for a blockade. He took precedence of Spain, domineered over the princes of Rhenish Germany, was terrible in Italy, and held England for a time almost as a dependency of France. His subjects, dazzled by his conquests, resigned freely such few political rights as they had up to this time enjoyed. His courtiers prostrated themselves at his feet as slavishly as any Oriental dependents at the feet of their hereditary despot. They persuaded him that he was invincible abroad and omnipotent at home; that he was greater than Alexander and wiser than Charlemagne; and that he had a right to the impious title of Lieutenant of God upon Earth. To be allowed to accompany him in his walks, to be entrusted with his sword or cane, to hold a taper during his toilette, were honours to live and die for; but to be exiled from Court, and excluded from the sunshine of his favour, was esteemed a sentence little worse than death. Surrounded thus by adulators and mistresses, blinded by the brilliancy of his own prosperity, and living in an illusory world of vanity and punctilio, Louis XIV. was still a great, a magnificent, and a wise sovereign. It would be impossible to enumerate one-third of the commercial, scientific, and literary glories of his reign—glories, however, for the most part imagined, matured, and executed by the unparalleled genius of Colbert—glories which carried the renown of Louis XIV. to the farthest extremities of Asia, and brought the ambassadors of Siam to pay homage to the crown of France. His fleets covered the seas; his colonies embraced the West Indies, Asia, and the coasts of Africa; his frontiers bristled with fortresses; and the interior of his dominions (connected by canals and causeways, adorned by prosperous cities, and rich with all the results of industry) abounded in manufactories, public buildings, and benevolent institutions. Artists, architects, and men of science received encouragement at his hands. He extended the royal library; founded the

Academy of Sciences; established schools of art; and beheld his own glory reflected in the persons of Corneille, Molière, Racine, Boileau, La Fontaine, La Bruyère, La Rochefoucault, Bossuet, Vaubon, Descartes, Colbert, Le Brun, the Poussins, and many more. Upon the whole, it may be said that Louis XIV. had, at the period of the treaty of Nimeguen, attained the utmost height of that success towards which his ministers and generals had been carrying him ever since the year 1652. Henceforth his fortunes declined; and the mortifications of his old age almost effaced the splendid records of his middle life.

Notwithstanding the peace lately concluded, the king continued his aggressions, seized upon Strasburg, laid claim to the town of Alost in the Netherlands, and blockaded Luxembourg. He then besieged Courtrai, and possessed himself of Treves. The emissaries of Spain and Austria, alarmed by these conquests, now induced him to convert the treaty of Nimeguen into a twenty years' truce, which was effected in the month of August, 1684. The love of glory, flattery and pomp, which had hitherto characterized Louis XIV., now gave place to the satiety of later life, and to the extreme religious views of a bigoted devotee. He was privately married to Madame de Maintenon, and death had deprived him of the services of the inestimable Colbert. Yielding his mind up to the narrow counsels of his confessor and imbibing the prejudices of his wife, he resolved to convert, by fair or cruel means, the whole of his Protestant subjects. Bribery and flattery brought ample lists of converts; but severity was found a less expensive weapon, and in the year 1685, the king let loose his bloodhound troops upon the Huguenot population. They had full licence to pillage, to imprison, to confiscate, to torture, and to kill. The edict of Nantes was revoked. Upwards of seven hundred places of worship were razed to the ground. The clergy of the persecuted faith were hunted like wild beasts. The leaders of the refractory were broken on the wheel; and the parishes were bribed to give up the victims at so much per dozen. The peasants were then ordered to expel them from the villages, and the guards to

prevent them from passing the frontier. They were thus hemmed in, as at a *battue*, stripped, loaded with chains, tortured, and put to death. The consequences of this horrible persecution were to rob France of more than 50,000 of the most industrious among her population. Forty thousand took refuge in England alone, and 400,000 consented to remain in France upon condition of subscribing to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church. The history of this tyranny is the darkest blot upon the fame of Louis XIV. In 1686, Germany, Spain, Holland and Savoy united against France; but the king, with his usual sagacity, anticipated the designs of his enemies by marching 20,000 men into Germany, A.D. 1688, and seizing upon Philipsburg and Manheim. He next turned his attention to the affairs of England, and espoused the cause of James II., then a fugitive before the arms of William and Mary. Thirteen French ships of the line escorted James to Ireland, in March, 1689; and six thousand French troops fought in his defence at the battle of the Boyne. This engagement, however, proving victorious to William III. and fatal to the pretensions of James, the latter crossed over to France and passed the remainder of his life at St. Germain, dependent upon the generosity of the *Grand Monarque*. In the meantime the devastations of Turenne had been repeated with tenfold cruelty in the unhappy country of the Palatinate. Palaces, churches, universities, towns and villages were alike destroyed. Even the cemeteries were dismantled, and the ashes of the dead scattered to the winds. A cry of indignation went up from all Europe, and three great armies were raised in Germany commanded by Duke Charles of Lorraine, the Elector of Brandenburg, and Prince Waldeck. By these generals the French were driven from the Rhine, and several of their conquests recaptured. In Flanders the troops of Louis were defeated by an English and German army commanded by Waldeck and Lord Churchill; and at sea the advantage still lay with the Dutch and English. On the 29th of May, 1692, Admiral Tourville was signally defeated off Cape la Hogue; and in 1693, he attempted

in vain to take Cadiz and Gibraltar. A victory was gained, however, on the 17th of June over Sir G. Rooke and the Dutch vice-admiral. At length a general peace was desired by all parties, and in the month of September, 1697, the treaty of Ryswick was concluded. Louis, with unexpected moderation, resigned Lorraine, Treves, and the Palatinate, acknowledged the title of William III., gave up Philipsburg, and consented to destroy the fortifications of Strasburg. But he was not moderate without a motive. Standing in precisely the same relation of consanguinity to the childless Charles II. as did the Emperor Leopold, he aspired to the succession of Spain. Charles was dying, and all Europe was eager to know upon which claimant he would bestow the rich inheritance of his kingdom. Leopold had in his favour the long continuance of the crown of Spain in the Austrian family, and his direct descent from the Emperor Maximilian. Louis, in the treaty of the Pyrenees, had formally renounced all claim to Spain, as his father had done before him—added to which, the French and Spanish people nationally detested each other. Still the king's ambition recognised no obstacles, and repudiated all former obligations. He entered into a treaty of partition with William III., and they agreed to claim and divide the territories of Spain. Charles died in November, 1700, and superseded all these plans by unexpectedly bequeathing the whole of his dominions to Philip of Anjou, second son of the Dauphin of France and grandson of Louis XIV. The king immediately broke his treaty with William, and was content to secure this fine inheritance for the duke; England, Holland and Spain recognised him as Philip V.; but the Emperor of Austria declared for war, and Louis, by imprudently acknowledging the Pretender as King of England, provoked William and the Dutch provinces to ally themselves with Leopold. The death of the English king at this important juncture (December, 1702) caused a brief uneasiness to the members of the alliance; but Queen Anne, his successor, renewed his engagements, and sent Marlborough to the command of the allied armies in the Low Countries. The fortunes of Louis

XIV. seemed now to forsake him before the bold and brilliant Marlborough. Several towns were besieged and taken by the English, and the first of a series of splendid victories was fought at Blenheim, August 2nd, 1704. In Spain the allies achieved rapid successes. The Archduke Charles was proclaimed by the title of Charles III., and the claims of Philip were ignored. Catalonia united with the invaders, and the Earl of Peterborough entered Madrid in triumph. The campaign of 1706 proved equally disastrous to France, and robbed her of nearly all Flanders, including Antwerp, Brussels, Ostend and Menin; while Prince Eugene, on the Italian frontier, obtained, in the victory of Turin, an advantage which deprived the house of Bourbon of all its power in that direction. The defeat of the allies at the battle of Almanza in Spain (April 25th, 1707) created a temporary diversion in favour of France; but in all other quarters an uniform fatality attended the arms of the once invincible Louis. In 1708 the king fitted out an unsuccessful expedition to Scotland in aid of the Pretender, and in Flanders the allies continued to make alarming progress. On the 25th of October, Lille was taken, and the king, exhausted in his resources, humbled in his ambition, and fearful lest the next step should be an attack upon Paris, sued at the Hague for peace. He offered ample concessions, but the demands of the allies were so extravagant, that, impoverished as he was, Louis rejected them with disdain. His people, proud to the last, applauded his constancy, and amid all the rigours of a terrible winter raised a loan in aid of the war. The poor voluntarily reinforced the ranks. The rich sent their plate to the mint. The noblest fed upon oaten bread, following in this the example of Madame de Maintenon. Ill-clad, half-starved, and desperate, the legions of Louis, under Marshals Villars and Boufflers, still fought and were worsted in Flanders, and in 1710 the king solicited peace on terms even more conciliatory than before. The allies required Louis himself to expel his grandson from the throne of Spain; but the old monarch, more truly great in his adversity than in his plenitude of prosperity, treated the proposition as an insult, and renewed the war. By this time, after many reverses,

Philip obtained the ascendancy in Spain, and at length, with the exception of Catalonia, gained possession of his entire kingdom. The campaign of 1711 was as disastrous as ever to France, and as uninterruptedly glorious to the English arms. A sudden change of the ministry at St. James's occurred now, however, to turn the scale. The new party dismissed the great Marlborough from his command, and a suspension of hostilities on the part of the English ensued; but Prince Eugene, though deprived of his ally, commanded an army infinitely superior to that of Louis, and even threatened a siege of Paris. The king was in despair. Domestic bereavements at this time pressed heavily upon him. His son, his two grandsons, and one of his great-grandsons, all died within the space of one year, and the Duke d'Anjou, a sickly infant, alone remained to claim the succession of the crown. Then it was that Louis XIV., at seventy-four years of age, thought to place himself at the head of his nobles and die with them in one last and hopeless effort. Fortunately this heroic determination was rendered unnecessary by the valour and skill of Marshal Villars. He kept the field in Flanders with inferior forces, and in 1712, took several fortresses, raised the drooping spirits of the nation, and enabled his sovereign to treat for peace upon less galling terms. A great conference was by this time opened at Utrecht, and the articles of a general peace discussed. In accordance with this instrument, signed in the month of April, 1713, Louis XIV. ceded to England Hudson's Bay, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, and consented to demolish the fortifications of Dunkirk—Philip V. of Spain renounced all claim to the crown of France, and resigned Gibraltar and Minorca—Sicily was given up, with the title of king, to the Duke of Savoy—and the Elector of Brandenburg received the province of Upper Guelderland, the principality of Neufchâtel, and the title of King of Prussia. The Emperor of Austria, who had at first refused to make peace, concluded a treaty with France on the 7th of September, 1714; and thus terminated that long and disastrous war by which the enormous resources of France had been utterly spent, the flower of her soldiery cut down,

and the pride of the most ambitious of European sovereigns humbled to the dust. As the year 1715 advanced, it became evident that Louis had not long to live. His great-grandson, the Duke of Anjou, was only five years of age, and his nephew, Philip of Orleans, aspired to the regency. The king, however, mistrusting the character of Orleans, who was unprincipled, irreligious, and extravagant, left the command of the household troops and all the chief power of the state, in the hands of his illegitimate sons, the Duke of Maine and the Count of Toulouse. He even registered a decree in parliament which secured to these princes the legitimate rights of succession in the event of the death of his infant successor. On the 26th of August, 1715, he sent for the child and advised him to love peace, to consult the happiness of his people, and to take warning by the miseries of the last eighteen years. On the 1st of September he died, being close upon seventy-seven, and having reigned during a period of seventy-two years. Selfish, despotic, and culpably vainglorious, Louis XIV. yet possessed many of the qualities of a great sovereign, and has commanded the reluctant admiration of even his least favourable biographers. It has been sagaciously remarked that his reign was a great experiment "to try if absolute power was compatible with modern civilization, and whether it was the natural, the durable, the just form of government." We would add to this, that it was also an experiment to try if foreign conquest and limitless ambition formed the true basis of power. It was both, and, fortunately for the peace of the world and the prosperity of the human race, it failed in the establishment of either proposition. By it the cause of liberty was in the end aided rather than retarded, and before the eighteenth century had passed away, the seeds which it had sown sprang to a terrible maturity, and produced that extraordinary convulsion of society by which, amid bloodshed and anarchy, the emancipation of thought was effected, the rights of the individual were established, and the great principles of freedom and equality were evoked.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF LOUIS XV. TO THE CLOSE OF THE
REIGN OF TERROR.

(A.D. 1715—1794.)

HAD Louis XIV. died at the time when Orleans was most unpopular in France, that prince would have intrigued in vain for the regency; but certain of the king's later acts, and the degree of favour shown by him to his illegitimate issue, had now turned the tide of public opinion, and operated in favour of the duke. This favour he had skilfully cultivated both with the parliament and the people, and so, when the will of the late sovereign was read to them, the former without hesitation set aside the pretensions of the Duke de Maine, and invested Orleans with the regency. His first acts were merciful and judicious. He secured to his former enemy, Madame de Maintenon, a liberal pension. He liberated all who were imprisoned for their religious opinions. He fixed the value of the coinage. He caused the troops to be punctually paid. And he restored to the parliament that right of remonstrance of which it had been deprived by Louis XIV. The next remarkable event was the commencement of a war with Spain—a war chiefly fomented by the Spanish minister, Cardinal Alberoni. This crafty politician, having excited insurrections in France and persuaded Philip to lay claim to the succession, despatched a Spanish fleet to the coast of Brittany, A.D. 1719. But Orleans was prompt to defend the king, the state, and himself. He suppressed the revolt, forwarded troops to the point of danger, and saw the discomfited fleet withdraw without a blow. The war that ensued was brief, and terminated with advantage to France. Alberoni was exiled; Philip once more renounced his pretensions; and, with the exception of some little differences in the year 1725, the courts of Paris and Madrid long continued to maintain their amicable relations. In 1720 burst the gigantic Mississippi bubble; a scheme which was countenanced by the regent and

the parliament, and which proved even more disastrous than its famous successor of South Sea celebrity. The same year beheld the commencement of that terrible pestilence known as the plague of Marseilles, and consecrated for ever by the heroic exertions of Bishop Belzunce. The disease raged for the space of thirteen months, and it is thought that one half of the inhabitants of the city perished during that time. On the 2nd of December, 1723, the regent was struck with apoplexy while visiting one of his mistresses at Versailles. He left three daughters, all infamously notorious, and a son remarkable for his narrow intellect and religious fervour. Louis XV. had now attained his majority, and the Duke de Bourbon, grandson to the great Condé, became prime minister. To choose a wife for this monarch of thirteen formed the first anxiety of the state, and the choice of the minister fell at length upon the Princess Maria Leeczinski, daughter of the ex-king of Poland. The marriage was celebrated on the 4th of September, 1725; and proved far from happy in its results. To the Duke de Bourbon succeeded, in 1726, the conscientious and pacific Cardinal Fleury. This minister was, however, through his very virtues of economy and caution, incapable of conducting a war with spirit or success. These deficiencies were painfully manifest in the Polish war which commenced A.D. 1733, and had for its object the restoration of the crown to Stanislaus, father-in-law of Louis XV. Russia and Austria declared for Augustus III., son of the usurper, Augustus II., now lately dead. Louis sided with Stanislaus, who, being cordially welcomed by his former people, established himself in Dantzic, and awaited succours from France. Fleury, with culpable parsimony, sent only 1500 men. Stanislaus fled, in despair, to Prussia; Dantzic surrendered; Augustus became undisputed King of Poland; and France continued the contest with his allies. The wars of Louis XIV. began now to be acted over again, upon the self-same ground, and under the self-same generals. Marshal Villars attacked the Austrian power in Italy, and the Duke of Berwick was opposed on the Rhine to Prince Eugene. Upon both frontiers the French

arms were successful, and, being seconded in South Italy by the King of Spain, Louis had the satisfaction of seeing Naples invaded and conquered by Don Carlos with scarcely any opposition. Having commenced in 1733, this war continued till the signature of a general treaty of peace in the month of October, 1735. The Duchies of Lorraine and Bar were given to Stanislaus; Naples and Sicily were ceded to Don Carlos, son of Philip of Spain; Poland was secured to Augustus III., France resigned her Rhenish conquests; and Maria Theresa, daughter to the Emperor of Austria, was recognised by the European powers as successor to the imperial crown and its numerous dependencies. The act by which this latter arrangement was effected, received the name of the Pragmatic Sanction. Five years elapsed. The emperor died on the 90th of October, 1740, and Maria Theresa, by virtue of the Pragmatic Sanction, ascended the throne. What ensued is a disgrace to the history of Europe, and a blot upon the chivalry of the eighteenth century. Finding only a woman to oppose their pretensions, the kings her neighbours united to plunder and dethrone her. Frederick the Great, of Prussia, laid claim to Silesia—the Elector of Bavaria, aided by the armies of Louis XV., demanded the imperial crown—Augustus of Poland asserted his right to the entire inheritance. Advancing on every side, the foes of Maria Theresa occupied Breslau, Molwitz, the Danube, and the city of Prague. Vienna was next menaced, and the empress with her infant son fled for safety to Hungary. Here she found a chivalric devotion that changed the fortunes of the war. The Croats and Pandours, animated by the example of the Hungarians, armed in defence of their sovereign; Sardinia went over to her aid; and England, ever prompt in the cause of justice, sent not only her soldiers, but her king. And now, in quick succession, the armies of the empress achieved a series of brilliant victories. Austria was re-taken, Bavaria laid waste, and France defeated in Bohemia. On the 27th of July, 1743, the French and English armies encountered each other on the banks of the Maine. King George II. commanded in person, and with a force

numbering 20,000 less than that of the Duke de Grammont, achieved a signal victory. This was the famous battle of Dettingen. The King of Prussia next entered into a treaty by which Maria Theresa ceded Silesia in return for the promise of peace; and Louis turned his attention to the conquest of the Low Countries. Commanding in person upon this occasion, he was shortly compelled to delegate his office to Marshal Saxe, and march to the defence of Alsatia, then threatened by an Austrian army under Prince Charles of Lorraine, brother-in-law of Maria Theresa. Lorraine, a prompt and skilful general, must have worsted the royal army but for the unexpected infringement of the Silesian treaty by Frederick of Prussia, who invaded Bohemia, and possessed himself of Prague in the month of September, 1744. Lorraine was then recalled from Alsatia to the defence of Bohemia—the Germanic frontiers of France were relieved from attack—and Frederick, forced to retreat before the Austrian legions, was glad to conclude a peace. Success had, in the mean time, attended the arms of Marshal Saxe, one of the ablest commanders produced by any age. At Fontenoy, on the 11th of May, 1745, he defeated the allied forces of England, Holland, and Austria, and within the two following years acquired for his sovereign the dominion of almost the whole of the Austrian Netherlands. These triumphs were, however, balanced by the losses of Marshal Villars in Italy, which were numerous and severe. At the commencement of the year 1745, the Elector of Bavaria died, having for three years usurped the inheritance of Maria Theresa. The husband of that princess, Francis of Tuscany, was then raised to the throne of Austria, with but little opposition, and in 1748 negotiations for a general peace were opened at Aix-la-Chapelle. In May a suspension of hostilities was agreed upon, and on the 18th of October the treaty was concluded. All nations were now pacified, and peace once more prevailed in Europe. France ceded her Flemish conquests—the Pragmatic Sanction was again solemnly recognised—the Dutch were reinstated in the provinces which they had lost—and

England gave up to France the island of Cape Breton, which had been conquered in the year 1745. From this time till the year 1756, France enjoyed an interval of peace, during which the commerce of the country made considerable progress, and the city of Paris underwent many signal improvements. Art and architecture were extensively cultivated; but both were degraded in their outward expression by the bad taste of the age, and we of a later day can only regret the patronage that multiplied deformity, frivolity, and sensuality. These eleven years of peace were, however, troubled by such disputes among the clergy, that Pope Benedict XIV. was heard to wonder how the government continued to exist. In 1756 a war, which had been for some time anticipated, broke out between England and France. The limits of our possessions in America and Hindostan had been ill-defined in the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, and had already occasioned some unimportant hostilities. But now all the great powers of Europe became parties to the contest—matters assumed a general aspect—each sovereign pursued some object of his own in addition to that of his allies, and the Seven Years' War commenced. The French grasped at our possessions in North America; Maria Theresa sought the recovery of Silesia; England and Prussia united to defend their mutual possessions; and France and Austria entered into an aggressive alliance with Russia, Poland, Saxony, and Sweden. The war began with the capture of Minorca by the Duke de Richelieu, and the defeat of Admiral Byng by the French fleet. Byng evinced upon this occasion so much hesitation and cowardice, that on his return to England he was tried, condemned, and shot. By land, Frederick of Prussia, undismayed by the alliance of five hostile powers, dared to strike the first blow. He invaded Saxony, took Dresden, blockaded the Saxon army at Poina, defeated fifty thousand Austrians at the battle of Lowositz, and forced the whole Saxon army to capitulate. His next expedition was against Bohemia, where he won the celebrated battle of Prague, and blockaded the town. He then marched against General Daun, at Kolin,

leaving a part of his army to carry on the blockade. Being defeated at Kolin, he was at length compelled to raise the siege of Prague, and evacuate Bohemia. In the mean time Louis aspired to the conquest of Hanover, and sent thither an army of sixty thousand men, commanded by the Marshals Richelieu and D'Estrées. Hanover was then defended by a mixed army under the Duke of Cumberland. In this emergency the only ally of the great Frederick deserted him. Cumberland retreated as the French advanced, capitulated disgracefully at the convent of Kloster Seven, and left Hanover to the mercy of the invaders. Any other than the King of Prussia would have despaired. He did better. He assembled his little army of twenty thousand men, marched against the French and Germans, who were fifty thousand strong, met them on the banks of the Saale on the 5th of November, 1757, and won the brilliant victory of Rosbach. He then hurried back to Silesia, and on the 5th of December defeated an Austrian army at Leuthen. The English, under the spirited ministry of the elder Pitt, now reinforced the Hanoverians, and, supported more efficiently than before by his British allies, Frederick began the campaign of 1758. From this time, up to the year 1762, he filled all Europe with his renown, was frequently defeated, never dismayed, always fertile in resources, prompt in action, and, under every adversity, terrible to his foes. Exhausted in time by his very successes, he was brought to the last extremity of resistance, when Peter III. of Russia succeeded the Empress Elizabeth upon the imperial throne. An enthusiastic admirer of military glory, the young emperor immediately withdrew the Russian forces, declared himself the friend and ally of the Prussian hero, and restored to him all that had lately been conquered by the Russian arms. This unexpected good fortune extricated Frederick from all his perils, and though Peter only reigned for six months, secured to him advantages which not even his great skill and courage could, after so long a struggle, have effected. In the meantime (to return to the events of France) all had gone wrongly with the armies of Louis XV.

Defeated by land at Creveld and Minden in the years 1758 and 1759; by sea off Lagos on the 17th of August in the latter year, and off Brest on the 20th of the November following; having lost the island of Guadaloupe, and having sustained the defeat of Quebec, the crown of France was, step by step, deprived of nearly all her colonies, both American and East Indian—even of Belleisle, a little sea-girt island off her own coasts of Britanny. At length the nations grew desirous of peace, and (the warlike ministry of Pitt having been brought to a conclusion by the accession of George III.) negotiations were begun towards the close of 1762. On the 10th of February, 1763, the articles of a general peace were signed. France surrendered to England Canada and its dependencies, Minorca, Florida, Guadaloupe, Martinique, and some other islands in the West Indies. Spain received Cuba; and Frederick the Great retained his Silesian conquest. No treaty could have been conceived or executed on terms more humiliating to the pride and independence of the French. That military people, tenacious of their national honour, scorned the king and the government, and from henceforth the sentiment of loyalty became extinct in France. In 1768, the island of Corsica was incorporated with the dominions of Louis XV. It had formerly been a tributary of Genoa; but, having rebelled of late years, it proved too strong to be mastered by the Genoese themselves, and was purchased by the French, who speedily suppressed the brave resistance of the natives, and took full possession. Not long after the conclusion of the peace, the Jesuits, who had long earned for themselves the hatred and mistrust of all classes, were attacked by the people, the press, and the parliament. The king, aided by an assembly of bishops, defended the obnoxious order for some time; but their intriguing ambition had armed against them too many enemies in all ranks of society, and no efforts could avail against the calm will of an entire nation. In 1764 they were utterly suppressed by an edict of the state, and this edict was afterwards confirmed by Pope Clement XIV. Bereaved, like Louis XIV.,

of all his immediate successors, the king lived to behold the deaths of his son, his son's wife, his two grandsons, and his queen. A fatality seemed to hang over this family. Its worthiest members generally died in their youth—its most vicious came to the throne, or held high offices under the crown, to misgovern, to impoverish, to exasperate the people. One of the worst of these, one of the most unprincipled, one of the most sensual and degraded, was Louis XV. Without being deficient in benevolence or piety, he was, nevertheless, dissolute, weak, inactive, and governed by intriguing favorites. After the death of his wife, in 1768, he plunged into excesses more disgraceful than ever, and died a victim to the small-pox on the 10th of May, 1774. He was at this time in the sixty-fifth year of his age, and the fifty-ninth of his reign.

About twenty years of age, amiable, irresolute, of simple tastes, and earnest piety, Louis XVI. succeeded to the throne at a time when these qualities of gentleness could avail but little against the crowding evils of the age, and when the supreme genius and iron will of a Cromwell or a Napoleon could alone have averted the destruction by which the state was menaced. Signs of dissolution and prophecies of woe were already abroad. Long wars and the lavish expenditure of the last century and a half, had reduced the finances of the kingdom to a deplorable condition. The public credit was at its lowest ebb. The treasury presented a deficit of forty millions. The people, over-taxed, restless, half-savage, and dangerously intelligent, abandoned agriculture and sought a precarious subsistence by smuggling and spoliation. A spirit of political and religious infidelity pervaded the middle and lower classes. The throne had too long been degraded by excess, and tarnished by scandal, to command the affection of the multitude. The nobles were scorned rather than reverenced, and not even the ancient stronghold of terror remained. The clergy, by their cruelties, their ignorance, and their debaucheries had alienated the great body of the people, and brought down upon themselves the satire and indignation of the enlightened.

In Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and D'Alembert, the new opinions had found their chief advocates and leaders. Before their sweeping censures Christianity, Loyalty, Tradition had trembled, and sunk away. They were speedily reinforced by all the intelligence of the age. A host of distinguished men hastened to their support, and the innovators carried all before them—levelling good as well as evil, trampling upon much that was pure in their reckless hatred of that which was foul, and sapping the foundations of truth, mercy, and chivalry, while compassing the necessary destruction of falsehood, despotism, imposition, and vice.

To the government of this crumbling edifice and this murmuring people came Louis, with his good heart, his boyish timidity, and his woful inexperience. His queen, Marie Antoinette, was a daughter of Maria Theresa, fair, generous, and impetuous. Surrounded by eager courtiers, and saluted for the first time as king and queen, they fell upon their knees, and cried, weeping, "Oh God, guide us! Protect us! We are too young to reign!"

The king's first act was to re-establish the parliament, and place the financial department in the hands of the impartial and provident Turgot. Unfortunately for himself and the country, Louis suffered his mind to be prejudiced against this able minister, and, dismissing him in 1776, gave his office to M. Necker, a less efficient but a less unpopular politician. A war with England was now proposed by the king's ambitious statesmen, who beheld at this juncture an opportunity of wresting from their ancient rival a large proportion of her foreign commerce. England and her American colonies were at variance. Not much more than a year had elapsed since the great battles of Lexington and Bunker's Hill, and the American independence was but just declared. It now became the obvious policy of France to foment this war, to support the rebellious colonists, and to transfer to the navies of Louis XVI. that maritime superiority which had so long been the bulwark of the English liberties. The king, from motives of forbearance, was unwilling to commence this war;

but, being overruled by his ministry, signed a treaty of alliance with the United States in the commencement of the year 1778. This treaty was equivalent to a declaration of war, and the first important action took place by sea off the isle of Ushant on the 27th of July. The fleets numbered thirty sail each; not a ship was captured or sunk on either side; and the fortune of the day was indecisive. In the following year, an alliance with Spain doubled the naval strength of Louis XVI. The French and Spanish admirals united their fleets, and hovered about the coasts of England without making any descent; whilst the Count d'Estaings, with twelve ships of the line, took the islands of Granada and St. Vincent, and made an unsuccessful attack upon St. Lucia, which had been lately conquered by the English. On the 16th of January, 1780, Admiral Rodney, then on his way to the relief of Gibraltar, encountered and defeated a Spanish fleet commanded by Don Juan de Langara. He then sailed on, unopposed, to Gibraltar, and next proceeded to the West Indies. While there he thrice engaged with the Count de Guichen, who had succeeded to the command of the French fleet. None of these actions were productive of important results. The Count de Guichen was replaced in 1781 by the Count de Grasse, a man of great skill and courage, who defeated the English admiral, Hood, on the 28th of April, and added Tobago to the conquests of France. In this year another enemy rose against England. The Dutch declared war, and George III. was involved at one time, by sea and land, in four great contests, namely, with France, Spain, America, and Holland. In the month of October, however, the surrender of York-Town by Lord Cornwallis virtually ended the contest between England and the United States; and the four European powers alone carried on hostilities. The month of April, 1782, was signalized by a hard-fought and sanguinary engagement between the Count de Grasse and Admiral Rodney. They met on the 12th off the island of Dominique, with nearly equal forces, and the French were disastrously defeated with a loss of eight ships, a ter-

rible sacrifice of life, and the captivity of the Count de Grasse. England was not, however, destined to profit much by the victory; for, as Admiral Rodney was sailing back with his well-won captures, a fearful storm arose, and most of the prizes were lost. Amongst these was the *Ville de Paris*, a fine ship of 110 guns, lately presented to the king by the citizens of Paris. On the 13th of October, in the same year, the fortress of Gibraltar was made the scene of a formidable assault, which failed utterly. The besiegers were commanded by the Duke de Crillon, an officer in the Spanish service; the Count d'Artois, brother to Louis; and the Duke de Bourbon. Negotiations for peace were now commenced, and her late successes by sea enabled England to treat at a less disadvantage than might have been expected, considering the circumstances of the war. The preliminaries were signed at Versailles on the 20th of January, 1783. France restored to England all her conquests, with the exception of St. Lucia, Tobago, the establishments on the river Senegal, and some trifling possessions in Africa and the East Indies. England relinquished all that she had captured. Spain acquired the island of Minorca.

More embarrassed than ever by the cost of the late war, the finances of France had now fallen into a worse state than before. The public debt was increased. The people, exasperated by a system of taxation which spared the wealthy and oppressed the poor, and imbued, moreover, with those democratic principles which had found their way from America to France, became still louder in the expression of their discontent. M. De Calonne had by this time succeeded M. Necker. He was brilliant, fluent, ready with expedients. Dreading the recriminations and plain-speaking that must have attended a meeting of the states-general, this minister proposed to convene the Notables — that is to say, an assemblage of persons gathered from all parts of the kingdom, and chiefly from the higher ranks of society. This measure had been taken by Henry IV. and by Louis XIII.; it was not, therefore, without precedent, and much was hoped by the nation. They

met, to the number of 137, in February, 1787. M. De Calonne laid before them the condition of the exchequer, and proposed to submit to taxation all the landed property of the kingdom, including that of the privileged classes. But he addressed an assembly composed almost exclusively of the privileged classes, and they would not hear his arguments. On the 9th of April, finding his position untenable, he resigned his office, and was succeeded by M. De Brienne. Still the Notables refused to abate their ancient immunities, and were in consequence dissolved on the 25th of May. The absolute necessity of procuring money now compelled the king arbitrarily to register a royal edict, which met with strong opposition from the parliament. This body was then banished to Troyes, but again recalled in the month of September. In 1788, M. de Brienne, weary of combating the difficulties of his office, resigned in favour of M. Necker. This gentleman, as the first act of his second ministry, proposed to convoke the states-general, and on the 5th of May, 1789, that august assembly filled the Hall de Menus in the Palace of Versailles. The king, in a brief speech, spoke hopefully of the present and the future, trusted that his reign might be commemorated henceforth by the happiness and prosperity of his people, and welcomed the states-general to his palace. Unforeseeing and placid, he beheld in this meeting nothing but the promise of amelioration, nor guessed how little prepared for usefulness or decision were its twelve hundred. It soon became evident that the real strength of the states-general lay in the commons. They formed the third estate, and numbered as many members as the clergy and noblesse together. They took upon themselves to decide whether the deliberations of the assembly should be carried on in three chambers or one—they covered their heads in presence of the king—they constituted themselves the "National Assembly," and invited the clergy and aristocracy to join them. The timid sovereign sanctioned these innovations, and the assembly proceeded to exercise its self-conferred functions. Supplies were voted for the army; the public debt was consolidated; a provisional collection of

taxes was decreed; and the inviolability of the members proclaimed. In the mean time the nobles, headed by the king's second brother, the Count d'Artois, were collecting in the neighbourhood of the Court and the capital such troops as they could muster from every quarter of the kingdom. Necker was exiled, and it became evident that the king's imprudent advisers had counselled him to have recourse to violence. Paris, long prepared for insurrection, rose *en masse*. Necker alone had possessed the confidence of the citizens, and his dismissal gave the signal for arms. Camille Desmoulins, a young and enthusiastic patriot, harangued the populace at the Palais Royal. The guards, when called out to disperse the mobs, refused to fire. The citizens formed themselves into a national guard. The foodless multitude attacked and pillaged in various quarters. The barriers were fired; and on the 14th of July, this wild army appeared before the walls of the Bastile. Stanch in his principles of military honour, the aged Marquis de Launay, then governor of the prison, refused to surrender, raised the drawbridge, and fired upon the multitude. His feeble garrison, consisting of eighty-two invalids and thirty-two Swiss, was menaced by thousands. The siege lasted four hours. The besiegers were joined by the French guards—cannon were brought—De Launay capitulated—the drawbridge was lowered, and the Bastile taken. Taken by a lawless sea of raging rebels, who forthwith massacred the governor, his lieutenant, and some of the aged invalids—set fire to the building, and razed it to the ground—freed the few prisoners found in the cells—garnished their pikes with the evidences of murder, and so paraded Paris. From this moment the people were supreme. The troops were dismissed from Versailles—Necker was recalled—the king visited Paris, and was invested at the Hotel de Ville with the tri-coloured emblem of democracy. Then began the first emigration. The Count d'Artois, the Prince of Condé, the Polignacs, and other noble and royal families, deserted in the moment of peril, and from beyond the frontiers witnessed the revolution in ignoble safety. The king and his

family remained at Versailles, sad at heart amid their presence-chambers and garden-groves, just four leagues from volcanic Paris. Hither, from time to time, during the few days that intervened between the 14th of July and the 4th of August, came strange tidings of a revolution which was no longer Parisian, but national—tidings of provincial gatherings—of burning chateaux—of sudden vengeances done upon unpopular officials, intendants, tax-gatherers, and the like. It was plain that the First Estate must bow its proud head before the five-and-twenty savage millions, make restitution, speak well, smile fairly—or die. The memorable 4th of August came, when the nobles did this, making ample confession of their weakness. The Viscount de Noailles proposed to reform the taxation by subjecting to it every order and rank; by regulating it according to the fortune of the individual; and by abolishing personal servitude, and every remaining vestige of the feudal system. An enthusiasm, which was half fear and half reckless excitement, spread throughout the Assembly. The aristocrats rose in their places and publicly renounced their seigniorial dues, privileges, and immunities. The clergy abolished tithes and tributes. The representative bodies resigned their municipal rights. All this availed but little; and should have been done many months before to have weighed with the impatient commons. The people scorned a generosity which relinquished only that which was untenable, and cared little for the recognition of a political equality that had already been established with the pike. The Assembly was at this time divided into three parties—that of the aristocracy, composed of the greater part of the noblesse and clergy; that of the moderate party, headed by M. Necker; and that of the republicans, amongst whom the most conspicuous were Lafayette, Sièyes, Robespierre, and the great, the impetuous, the profligate Mirabeau. But theirs was not the only deliberative body. A minor assembly, consisting of one hundred and eighty electors; a mass of special assemblies of mechanics, tradesmen, servants, and others; and a huge incongruous mob at the Palais Royal, met daily and nightly for purposes of

discussion. These demonstrations, and the extreme opinions to which they hourly gave rise, alarmed the little Court yet lingering around the king. They persuaded him that he must have military assistance, and the troops were, unhappily, recalled to Versailles. The regiment of Flanders and a body of dragoons came, and on the 1st of October the newly-arrived officers were invited to a grand banquet by their comrades of the royal body-guard. After the dinner was removed and the wine had begun to circulate, the queen presented herself with the Dauphin in her arms, and her husband at her side. Cries of loyalty and enthusiasm burst forth—their healths were drunk with drawn swords—the tri-coloured cockades were trampled under foot, and white ones, emblematic of Bourbon, were distributed by the maids of honour. The news of this fatal evening flew to Paris. Exasperated by the arrival of the soldiery—by the insult offered to the tri-colour—by the fear of famine and civil war—the mob rose in fury, and with cries of “Bread! bread!” poured out of Paris and took the road to Versailles. Here, sending messages, threats, and deputations to the king and to the Assembly, the angry thousands encamped for the night, in inclement weather, round about the palace. Towards morning a grate leading into the grand court was found to be unfastened, and the mob rushed in. On they went, across the marble court and up the grand staircase. The body-guards defended themselves valiantly and raised the alarm—the queen fled, half-dressed, to the king’s chamber—the “living deluge” poured through galleries and reception-rooms, making straight for the queen’s apartments. On this terrible day, Marie Antoinette was, above all, the object of popular hatred. Separated now from the revolutionists by the hall of the Eil-de-Bœuf, where the faithful remnant of body-guards had assembled to defend them to the last, the royal family listened tremblingly to the battering of the axes on the yet unbroken doors. At this moment of peril came Lafayette, with the national guard of Paris, and succeeded in clearing the palace, in pacifying the multitude, and in rescuing, for the time, the hapless group in the king’s apartments. The mob, now

driven outside, demanded that Louis should show himself, and go to Paris with his family. Refusal and remonstrance were alike useless. The royal carriage was brought out, the king and his family took their places, the mob thronged round, and so, with the defeated body-guards in the midst, and some bloody trophies of the struggle carried forward upon pikes, the mournful procession went from Versailles to Paris. Lodged thenceforth in the Tuilleries, treated with personal disrespect, and subjected to all the restrictions of imprisonment, Louis and his queen supported indignities with dignity, and insult with resignation. On the 4th of September, M. Necker relinquished his office. He had been so courageous as to oppose the decree of the 16th of June, by which all distinctions of titles, armorial bearings, and other hereditary honours were abolished. From having been the idol of the republicans he now found himself dangerously unpopular, and so retired in safety to Geneva. During all this time the emigration of the noblesse went on. Assembling upon the German frontier towards the spring-time of the year 1791, they formed themselves into an army under the command of the Prince of Condé, and adopted for their motto, "Conquer or die." Fearful, however, of endangering the king's personal safety, they took no measures to stay the tide of rebellion, but hovered by the Rhine, watchful and threatening. Soon the king and queen, their two children, and the Princess Elizabeth, sister to the king, were the only members of the royal family left in Paris. Flight had long been talked of and frequently delayed; but at last everything was arranged, and Monday night, June 20th, 1791, was fixed for the attempt. Eluding the vigilance of the guards, they stole out of the palace in disguise, and after numerous delays and misapprehensions, during which the queen lost her way in the Rue de Bac, they entered a hackney-coach driven by the Count de Fersen, and exchanged it, at the gate St. Martin, for a carriage and four. Thus, never pausing, they passed Chalons, and arrived at St. Menehould. Here they were to have been met by some cavalry, commanded by the Marquis de Bouillé;

but the time fixed for their arrival was so long gone by that the escort, weary of waiting, had given them up, and gone on to Varennes. Stopping to change horses at St. Menehould, the king was recognised ; and at Varennes, within reach of Bouillé's soldiers, he was stopped and questioned. The national guard flew to arms—an aide-de-camp came up in breathless haste, seeking the fugitives and bearing the decree of arrest—the horses' heads were turned towards Paris, and the last chance for life and liberty was past ! After a return-journey of eight days, the king and his family re-entered the capital, and were received in profound silence by an immense concourse. More closely guarded, more mistrusted than ever, he was now suspended by the National Assembly from those sovereign functions which he had so long ceased to exercise or possess. In the meantime the articles of a new Constitution had been drawn up, and were publicly ratified by the royal oath and signature on the 14th of September. The National Assembly, having completed this work, dissolved itself on the 30th, and the members of the new, or legislative assembly, took their seats on the 1st of October, 1791.

And now the violences of late committed, and the anarchy existing not only in Paris but in all districts of France, had roused the indignation of Europe. Francis II., Emperor of Austria, entered into an alliance with the King of Prussia, hostilities were threatened, and the Assembly declared for war, on the 20th of April, 1792. An invasion of the Austrian Netherlands was attempted ; but the French soldiers fled upon the first sight of the Prussian columns, and General Rochambeau laid down his command. On the 25th of July, the Duke of Brunswick, who commanded the allies, issued a violent and imprudent manifesto, declaring himself authorized to support the royal authority in France ; to destroy the city of Paris ; and to pursue with the extremity of military law all those who were disposed to resist the policy of Europe. He at the same time put his immense army in motion, and advanced over the frontier with 70,000 Prussians and 68,000 Austrians and emigrant French. Perhaps no effort

on the part of his most eager enemy could have so injured the cause and perilled the safety of Louis XVI. The assembly replied by fitting out an army of 20,000 National Volunteers, and giving the command to General Dumouriez. Brunswick took Verdun and Longwy, and advanced towards the capital, confident of victory; but, being met by the active and sagacious Dumouriez, was forced to retreat. Verdun was won back again on the 12th, and Longwy on the 18th of October. An Austrian army, engaged in the siege of Lille, was compelled to abandon the attempt; and Custine on the Rhine took possession of Trèves Spires, and Mayence. War having also been declared against the King of Sardinia, Savoy was taken; and the great victory of Genappes, won by General Dumouriez, on the 6th of November, subjected the whole of the Austrian Netherlands, with the exception of Luxembourg, to the power of France. On all sides the national troops repelled the invaders, resumed the offensive, and asserted the independance of a victorious revolution. In the mean time, enraged at this interference of the foreign powers, and fluctuating (according to the reports from the scene of war) between apprehension and exultation, the Parisian mob and the extreme republican party came to regard the king with increased enmity. He was named in the assembly with violent opprobrium; the mob, incited to fury by Robespierre and his associates, demanded the abolition of the royal authority; and on the 10th of August the palace of the Tuilleries was attacked. The national guards, who had been appointed to the defence of the courtyards, went over to the insurgents, and pointed their cannon against the chateau. Only the gallant Swiss were left, and they, overpowered by numbers and fighting gallantly to the last, were literally cut to pieces. The king and his family escaped to the National Assembly, and on the 14th were removed to the old Temple prison. From this time the Reign of Terror may properly be said to have begun. The chronicles of September are written in blood. Supreme in power as in crime, the party of the Fédérés, or Red Republicans, secured

the barriers, sounded the tocsin, and proceeded to clear the prisons by an indiscriminate massacre. Nobles and priests, aged men and delicate women, all who were guilty of good birth, loyalty, or religion, were slain without distinction. The inmates of the Abbaye, the Conciergerie, the Carmes, La Force, and the Bicêtre were all murdered, after a hideous mockery of trial, at which neither innocence nor evidence availed. The head of the beautiful and hapless Princess de Lamballe was paraded about Paris on a pike, and displayed before the eyes of the wretched prisoners in the Temple, whose confidential friend and companion she had been. Mademoiselle de Sombreuil only saved her father's life by drinking a goblet of blood. Mademoiselle Cazotte flung herself between her father and the murderers. Instances of the sublimest resignation, of the loftiest courage, are abundant amid the records of this appalling period. Thirteen thousand souls are said to have been sacrificed in Paris alone, and similar massacres were perpetrated at Orleans, at Rheims, at Lyons, and at Meaux. On the 21st of September, the legislative assembly, having presided for the allotted space of one year, was succeeded by a new body of representatives, chiefly consisting of the extreme republican party, and known by the name of the National Convention. To abolish the statutes of the kings, to leave the offices of government open to men of every condition, to persecute the members of the more moderate faction, and to impeach the king before the bar of the convention, were among the first acts of the new government: On the 11th of December, 1792, Louis, still placid and dignified, appeared before the tribunal of his enemies. He was accused of plots against the sovereignty of the people—of intrigues with the European powers—of tampering with Mirabeau, since dead—in short, of everything that might be construed into an effort for life, liberty, or prerogative. His trial lasted for more than a month, and during that time he was separated from his family. Hitherto Louis and his wife had at least shared their sorrows, and, by employing themselves in the education of the dauphin, had beguiled somewhat of the

tedious melancholy of prison life. Now it was over, and they were to meet but once again—to bid farewell. On Christmas-day the king drew up his will, and on the following morning was summoned to the Convention for the purpose of making his defence. This paper was read by his counsel, and at its conclusion, Louis spoke a few simple words relative to his own innocence and the affection which he had always felt towards his people. He was then conducted back to the Temple, and the discussions went on till the 15th of January, 1793, when it was resolved to put to the vote the three great questions of culpability, of the expediency of an appeal to the people, and of the nature of the punishment to be inflicted. On Tuesday the 15th, the two first questions were put, and the replies recorded. By all the king was voted guilty, and by a majority of two to one the appeal to the people was negatived. On Wednesday, the 16th, the question of punishment was in like manner propounded. The agitation of Paris was something terrible to witness. A savage mob gathered about the doors of the assembly, heaping threats upon all who dared to be merciful. Even those who most desired to save the king became intimidated, and some who had spoken bravely in his favour the day before now decreed his death. From Wednesday to Sunday morning, this strange scene lasted. Seven hundred and twenty-one members, in slow succession, with trembling, with confidence, with apologetic speech, or fierce enforcement, mounted the tribune one by one, gave in their "Fate-word," and went down to hear the judgment of their successors. Paine, the English democrat, entered his name on the side of mercy. Louis Egalité, Duke of Orleans, and father to the late Louis Philippe, had the unparalleled infamy to vote for death. Even the brave President Vergniaud, who had pleaded for Louis with passionate earnestness only a day or two before, wavered in his allegiance at the last, and spoke the fatal word. At length, when all had voted, death was found to be decreed by a majority of twenty-six voices. The king's counsel appealed against the sentence; but the appeal was rejected, and the

assembly recommenced voting, to fix the time of execution. Death without delay—death within four-and-twenty hours, was the result. On Sunday morning, January the 20th, the messengers of the Convention told Louis he must die. A priest, a delay of three days, and an interview with his family, was all that he asked. They granted him the first and last request; but the delay was refused. In the evening he was permitted to see his wife, sister, and children. They met in a chamber with glass doors, through which the municipal guards watched all the cruel scene. Falling into each other's arms, they were for some time speechless with sorrow, and the conversation that ensued was interrupted by cries and sobs. Then the king rose, promising to see them again on the morrow, and so ended this agony of two hours. About midnight, having recovered his serenity, and prayed with his confessor, the Abbé Edgeworth, he went to bed and slept soundly. Waking at five, he heard mass and received the sacrament. At eight the municipals summoned him to execution, and, willing to spare the feelings of those whom he loved, he left without a second farewell. There was a silence of death upon all the city. Silent were the lines of soldiers—silent the gazing multitudes—silent the eighty thousand armed men who guarded with cannon the space around the scaffold. Through all these rolled the solitary carriage, and to these the king, advancing suddenly as the last moment came, said in an agitated voice, "Frenchmen, I die innocent. I pardon my enemies, and I hope that France" At this moment he was seized by the executioners, the drums beat and drowned his voice, and in a few seconds he was no more. All at once the strange silence was broken—the executioner upheld the severed head—the shouts of the wild populace filled the air—and then they gradually cleared off, and the business of the day went on in Paris as if no unusual thing had been done. Such was the end of Louis XVI., a virtuous and well-intentioned sovereign, on the 21st of January, 1793.

The consequences of this great crime soon developed them-

selves. The act of regicide was equivalent to a declaration of war with the whole of Europe. England, Holland, Spain, the Germanic Confederation, Sweden, Naples, Rome, Bavaria, Suabia, and finally Russia, flew to arms. Almost at the same time La Vendée broke into open insurrection, and the republic found itself called upon to suppress disaffection at home, to organize armies, and to defend the country from 350,000 of the best troops in Europe, now approaching the frontiers upon every side. A levy of 300,000 men was accordingly decreed, and Dumouriez, entering Holland in February, took Breda on the 24th, and Klunderton the 26th of the month. On the 4th of March he took possession of Gertruydenberg ; but the Convention, suspicious of the hesitation with which he acted after this victory, and of the communications which passed between the French and Austrian camps, sent four deputies to arrest him in the midst of his army. The general, however, arrested them instead ; sent them over as prisoners to the Austrians ; and, after vainly endeavouring to persuade his soldiers to abandon the republican party and support the claims advanced by the young Duke of Chartres, went over himself to the enemy's camp, and was succeeded in his command by generals Dampierre and Custine. The allies now advanced upon Condé and Valenciennes, and both these generals surrendered in the month of July to an army commanded by the Duke of York. During the same month, the young dauphin was removed from his mother's care, and consigned to the custody of one Simon, a man of debased and brutal habits, and a cobbler by trade. Under the cruel treatment to which he was subjected by Simon, the child sickened, pined away, refused at last to speak, and died miserably on the 9th of June, 1795, after a martyrdom of twenty-four months. On the thirteenth evening of the following month, Marat, meanest and cruellest of the revolutionary tyrants, was assassinated in his lodgings by Charlotte Corday, a young lady of Caen. Heroic and beautiful, she travelled up alone from Normandy ; purchased her weapon in the Palais Royal ; obtained an interview ; and

stabbed Marat in his bath. Tried and condemned by the tribunal, she professed herself ready to die; but justified the deed which brought her hither. "I killed one man," she said, "to save a hundred thousand." She was executed on the evening of her trial, and went to the scaffold with a smile. Even at that time, there were some among the republican ranks who pronounced Charlotte Corday to be "*greater than Brutus.*" Having taken Valenciennes, the Duke of York made an unsuccessful attack upon Dunkirk, and during the latter part of the year 1793 the French acquired some ascendancy in Flanders. The army of the Moselle, commanded by Hoche and Pichegru, forced the Prussian and Austrian hosts to retreat; joined their forces with a second army then guarding the banks of the Moselle; and, marching into the Palatinate, encamped there in triumph. These achievements of the French armies abroad were, however, almost effaced by the disgrace which fell upon the name of the republic in consequence of its atrocities at home. The revolutionary government, despotic, sanguinary, ruled by Marat and Robespierre, and inspired by the blood-shedding spirit of the executioners of September, was now established in Paris. On the 14th of October, the queen, long detested by the people, was brought to trial. On the 16th, she also was executed. Cries and execrations followed her to the Place de la Révolution, and she was borne thither as an ordinary criminal, bound, seated in an open cart, protected by a double line of troops along the road, and accompanied by some detachments of cavalry. She mounted the scaffold with courage, and her head fell at a quarter past mid-day. The Duchess of Polignac, hearing this fatal news, uttered one shriek and expired. All this time the Convention was carrying on a civil war with the religious and loyal people of La Vendée. Lyons had risen, and, with twenty thousand men, declared against the Convention; Marseilles, Bourdeaux, Nismes, and Montauban had followed the example of the Lyonnais; and Toulon, stipulating only that the town and shipping should be held in trust for Louis XVII., called in the aid of an English fleet commanded by

Admiral Lord Hood. The Convention sent out fourteen armies against the rebellious provinces. Bourdeaux and Lyons were taken. Nantes fell, and its inhabitants were massacred, guillotined, and drowned by thousands. Toulon was besieged and captured, and the most horrible barbarities ensued. La Vendée alone, in the name of God and the king, maintained the struggle and kept up, with gains and losses, the uncertain warfare.

Even this gallant people were conquered at last. Seventeen thousand tried soldiers from the garrison of Mayence were marched across the Loire, under the command of General Kleber, and, after experiencing one defeat, were successful in four great actions at Châtillon and Chollet. The Vendéans appealed for help to England, and England, before granting their prayer, required that they should secure a seaport for the reception of the vessels. Eighty thousand of the royalists then marched out of their desolated province, and took the road to Granville. From this moment their cause was lost. Repulsed at Granville for want of field-pieces, and routed at Mans, they were utterly destroyed while endeavouring to pass the Loire at Savenay. At length the death of Henry de Laroche-Jacquelain, the hero of the Vendéans, completed the defeat of his party, and the merciless republic commenced among that hapless population a war of extermination little less savage than the war of the Albigenses or the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers. The armament from England came too late. General Thureau had already surrounded La Vendée with sixteen entrenched camps, and having thus hemmed in the wretched people, carried fire, and sword, pillage, murder, and every conceivable violence into the devoted province.

Terrible in her frontier-warfare, terrible in her provincial vengeance, the republic was nowhere so terrible as within the walls of unhappy Paris. From the month of November, 1793, to the end of July, 1794, the guillotine worked daily, and the scaffold ran with blood. Appropriately commencing with the abolition of religious belief, the worship of Reason,

the suppression of the Sabbath, and the institution of a new calendar, the government passed on to atrocities of which the pen would fain withhold all record. The Committee of Public Safety, the Commune of Paris, and the Convention, headed by the infamous and daring Robespierre, converted the capital into a theatre of perpetual executions. The Girondin party, whose moderation and virtue had hitherto been the redeeming honour of the Convention, were proscribed, condemned, and executed to the number of twenty-two. The Duke of Orleans, despite his professions of equality and patriotism, was guillotined. Malesherbes, Houchard, Custine, Beauharnais and others were sacrificed. The beautiful and courageous Madame Roland died upon the scaffold. Madame Elizabeth, sister to the late king, was put to death. Seventeen young girls, whose only crime was to have danced at a ball given by the Prussians, were mercilessly slaughtered. The octogenarians, De Noailles and De Maillé lost their heads. The ex-minister Roland, receiving intelligence of his wife's murder, ended his own existence. Barnave, Pétion, Bailly, and a host of well-meaning republicans perished. All the fugitive Girondins were outlawed. Two hundred thousand suspected persons were cast into prison, and thence, day by day, brought out in tumbrils to the place of doom. Convents, chateaux, chapels, were burnt, razed, and dismantled. Feasts of horrid licence were held in the metropolitan churches, and the Carmagnole was danced around the desecrated altars. Gifts of church furniture, bells for melting into cannon-balls, gold and silver vessels to be fashioned in the Mint, poured in from all parts of the country. Holidays consecrated to Genius, to Labour, to Opinion, and other abstractions were substituted for the feasts and festivals of the Church. The monuments of art were overthrown; and in the abundant circulation of an obscene and scurrilous press, the great masters of literature were forgotten. To add to the calamities of the country, a frightful famine desolated the provinces, and the consequences of military levies, massacres, and imprisonments became severely felt in the scarcity of

agriculturists. Public credit was at an end. The expenses of the government were defrayed by confiscations. Bloodshed, anarchy, and despotism were the order of the day. It was the Reign of Terror.

In the springtime of the year 1794, Robespierre became absolute ruler of the Convention. Eager to ratify his power by destroying that of his contemporaries, this ambitious republican proceeded to exterminate the leaders of all parties. He denounced the anarchists on the one side, as enemies to the true welfare of the State—he accused the moderates upon the other, as lukewarm in the cause of liberty. He reigned by murder, and sent to the scaffold all who had hitherto shared or disputed his authority. Fouquier Tainville, the public accuser, and the judges (who were all members of the revolutionary tribunal) were scarcely sufficient to fulfil the heavy duties of their detestable office. Fifty victims fell daily beneath their edicts; the scaffold was removed to the Faubourg St. Antoine; and an aqueduct was constructed to carry off the stream of blood. At length, terrified by the rapidity, the impartiality, and the number of Robespierre's condemnations, the members of the Convention resolved to rid themselves of the tyrant. No man's life was certain for a day. No man knew but that his name might be found upon the next list of victims. On the 27th of July, Robespierre was defied in the tribune, and, with his brother, and some of his accomplices, arrested. The day passed in a long struggle between the partisans of both sides. In the evening the insurgents recovered the advantage, liberated Robespierre, his coadjutor Henriot, and the rest. Henriot immediately surrounded the Convention with soldiers, and pointed his cannon before it; but the members of the assembly, with a courage that decided the fortunes of the day, read a decree of outlawry against Henriot, the commune, and the rebel members. The cannoniers refused to fire, and the battalions of the sections marched to secure the persons of those proscribed. Gathered together in an agony of apprehension, knowing that their day was over, and trembling before the consequences of

their crimes, the assassins were seized with rage and despair. Some threw themselves from the window. One strove to stab himself, and failed. Robespierre was found sitting in ghastly helplessness, with his jaw fractured by an ineffectual pistol-shot. They were cast rudely into a cart, and left till the morrow afternoon, when, the guillotine being once more erected in the Place de la Révolution, they were drafted thither, bound, mangled, half dead already, amid the yells and shoutings of an exulting multitude. Robespierre was lifted out of the cart and laid upon the block. He had not spoken for seventeen hours, but he opened his eyes and looked upward at the axe. The executioner tore the bandage from his livid face—the fractured jaw dropped powerless—he uttered a hideous shriek—the knife came down, and as his head fell, so ended the Reign of Terror.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM THE CLOSE OF THE REIGN OF TERROR TO THE PEACE
OF 1856.

(A.D. 1794—1856.)

THE Reign of Terror was over. The Convention, it is true, was not over, and some of its Jacobin members continued to advocate the principles of the revolutionary tribunals. The Jacobin club, head-quarters of Sansculottism, yet existed; and the rabble of the Faubourgs, comparing the disadvantages of peace and order with the licence of pillage and bloodshed, had recourse to riots. Still much that was evil crumbled suddenly away, and a dawn of Mercy spread graciously over the darkened horizon of the French Republic. The prison-doors were flung open, and the thousands detained on suspicion were released with scarcely the delay of an examination. The Girondists, recalled from exile, resumed their seats in the Convention. The revolutionary committees, having no longer their fifty victims *per diem*, became extinct for want of work. Two hundred and thirty-two prisoners, sent in chains from Nantes,

found themselves not only acquitted, but called upon for testimony regarding the atrocities practised in their department. The laws of Robespierre were abolished. Seventy members of the sanguinary commune were punished with death. Deputations arrived daily from the provinces with statements of untold severities. Emigrant priests and nobles were invited to return; and the churches were once again devoted to the worship of God.

The Reign of Terror was over—the reign of rage, of blasphemy, of degradation, of wilful brutality, of hideous Car-magnole dances. It was succeeded by a reign of luxury. Large fortunes had been made of late among the middle classes. Army contractors, editors, tradesmen, and republican purchasers of confiscated properties, had installed themselves in the deserted mansions of the *noblesse*. Paris was flooded by a citizen aristocracy, by wealthy *parvenus*, and by swindlers and adventurers of every description. The riches which these classes had hitherto found it politic to conceal, were now displayed; and the light-hearted nation (relieved from its pressure of fear, and casting off the unnatural gravity by which it had been possessed during the last few years) awoke as if from a terrible dream, banished the very remembrance of its past sufferings, and plunged into a whirlpool of dissipation. Brilliant *soirées*, elegant supper-parties, balls, theatres, cards, and excitements of every kind effaced the horrors that had gone before. An extraordinary fancifulness and refinement in dress prevailed. To the red caps, the rags, and the sabots of the revolutionists, succeeded a not wholly frivolous taste for the graceful costumes of classic antiquity. Beautiful *citoyennes* put into requisition the glittering fillets, the scarlet and amber tunics, and the fairy sandals of the maids of ancient Greece. The men plaited their hair upon the temples and confined it at the back with a comb, carried bouquets at their button-holes, wore two watches, affected cloths and linens of the finest quality, and called themselves *La Jeunesse Dorée*, or the Golden Youth of France. The social amenities were again cultivated. Civilization, politeness, and elegance of

speech came back with the revival of order; and society rose, Phoenix-like, from the ashes of her pre-revolutionary self.

While these changes of government and manners were going on in Paris, the campaigns abroad were eminently successful. All Flanders, the frontiers of Holland, Trèves, the Palatinate, Coblenz, and many strongholds on the Rhine, had submitted in 1794 to French commanders. In Spain, Fontarabia, St. Sebastian, and other places were taken. Less fortunate, however, at sea, the republic lost nearly all her West India possessions, and in Corsica the natives, assisted by an English force, had expelled the French from their purchased sovereignty. The new year opened with a great and extraordinary victory. A singularly severe frost, which hardened the rivers and enchain'd the shipping of Holland, enabled Pichegru and his legions to cross the Waal, to descend upon the interior of the Dutch provinces, and, on the 16th of January, 1795, to take possession of Amsterdam. The stadt-holder fled to England, and up to the close of the revolutionary wars, Holland remained a dependency of France. In this year peace was made with Spain and Prussia; and on the 17th of October the National Convention, after some sanguinary engagements with the royalists, the citizens, and the patriot-mobs, closed its three years' career of bloodshed, and was succeeded by the Executive Directory. It was in the last and most serious of these conflicts between the citizens and the Convention, that one Napoleon Buonaparte, a young Corsican officer who had served gallantly at Toulon, first distinguished himself.

Three great armies were organised by the republic in the spring-time of the year 1796. The army of the Sambre and the Meuse was confided to General Jourdan, and the army of the Rhine and the Moselle to General Moreau. These two commanders united their forces in Germany, and compelled the Archduke Charles to retreat with his Austrian hosts beyond the Neckar and the Danube. The army of Italy was conferred upon the young Corsican officer, Napoleon Buonaparte. He had but just married Josephine, widow of the Count

de Beauharnois, when appointed to this important command. The army awaited him at Nice, and on the 27th of March he reached his head-quarters. He there found an ill-fed, half-clad multitude of thirty-six thousand men, and his opponents were sixty thousand strong. But these thirty-six thousand were hardy, resolute, experienced soldiers; and their officers, already distinguished, were destined shortly to create for themselves names of undying renown. Amongst them were Massena, La Harpe, and Murat. From the first, this young general inspired his soldiers with confidence. His entrance into Italy was accomplished by a series of skilful manœuvres and successful engagements. He forced the pass of Montenotte, disarmed General Provera and his fifteen hundred men, triumphed again at Mondovi and Cherasco, and reduced the King of Sardinia to sue for peace. An armistice was then concluded, by which the co-operation of that sovereign was assured, and Piedmont thrown open as a gate into Italy. "Two standards, fifty-five pieces of cannon, five victories, fifteen thousand prisoners, and peace with the Piedmontese, were the results of a campaign of fifteen days." These successes were followed by the brilliant and decisive victory of Lodi, fought at the bridge over the Adda, May 10th, 1796. The Austrians, under General Beaulieu, were put to flight; many thousands were slain, and many thousands taken prisoners. From this moment the Italian army bore the reputation of being invincible. The conqueror pursued his advantages with unparalleled rapidity, and the republican flag floated over the walls of Milan a few days afterwards. He next possessed himself of almost every town of North Italy; received the homage of Genoa, the tribute of Modena, the advances of Naples, and, above all, the submission of the pope, who, having of late preached a crusade against the Republic, now paid down a subsidy of twenty-one millions, and surrendered one hundred masterpieces of art from the museums of the Holy See. This was the first occasion when Napoleon developed that system of art-plunder by which the metropolis of France was for twenty years enriched, and by which

a republic that had in its birth trampled upon beauty, refinement, and taste, became in the first years of its political consolidation the centre of all that was precious in sculpture, in painting, and in articles of virtù. Amid all these victories Mantua alone held out in favour of the imperialists, and to Mantua the army of Italy next proceeded to lay siege. In the mean time, Moreau, closely pressed by the Archduke Charles, retreated skilfully to France; and towards the latter end of this year an ill-concerted expedition was sent to invade Ireland under General Hoche. He returned, however, without having landed a man; and, being then forwarded to the coast of Wales, the whole of his troops were taken prisoners on the 23rd of February, 1797. The same month beheld the capitulation of Mantua, and the total subjugation of Italy. Napoleon next led his victorious legions along the Adriatic, took Gradisca and Trieste, and threatened the safety of Vienna. Austria was glad to negotiate for peace, and by the treaty of Campo Formio, signed October 17th, 1797, France obtained possession of Milan, Mantua, Modena, Ferrara, Bologna, Corfu, Zante, and the whole of the Austrian Netherlands.

These extraordinary achievements, performed by a young general in a single campaign, filled France with enthusiasm and the Executive Directory with uneasiness. They received him with unusual honour; paid extravagant homage to his genius; but feared his gigantic influence and his yet more gigantic ambition. An invasion of Egypt was projected, and the remoteness of the expedition influenced the jealous government in bestowing the command upon the hero of Italy. To gain possession of Egypt was to open a road to British India, to threaten England in her wealthiest dependency, and to secure a passage by land to regions which would otherwise have been far from accessible to a power so little qualified for the transport of armies by sea. Napoleon embarked at Toulon on the 10th of May, with an army of 40,000 veteran troops. Taking the Isle of Malta by the way, he sailed for the coast of Egypt; fortunately escaped any

encounter with the English fleet, which, commanded by Nelson, was then actually in search of him ; and, arriving safely at his destination, landed, and took Alexandria by storm on the 5th of July, 1798. He then marched up the country, and several times encountered and defeated the Mamelukes, a body of independent cavalry militia, which at that time had laid the people of Egypt under a system of grievous military oppression, and which alone resisted the invaders with anything like discipline and intrepidity. The most remarkable of these actions was the famous Battle of the Pyramids, which opened to the conqueror the gates of Cairo, Rosetta, and Damietta. On the 1st of August, Admiral Nelson arrived at Aboukir Bay at the mouth of the Nile, and destroyed the French fleet, which had been imprudently anchored in that exposed situation by Admiral Brueys. Two ships of the line and one frigate alone escaped the general destruction, and these were afterwards overtaken and captured. The French navy has never entirely recovered from the effects of this tremendous disaster. Left now in Egypt with his army, and deprived of the vessels upon which he had relied for his return, Napoleon accomplished the subjection of the whole country, and, being accompanied in his expedition by a staff of antiquarians, archaeologists, and other men of learning, divided his attention between science and warfare. Proceeding from Egypt to Palestine, he laid siege to Acre, then garrisoned by a Turkish army under the command of Sir Sidney Smith. After having made seventeen unsuccessful assaults and lost nearly the half of his army, Napoleon was at length compelled to raise the siege, and retreated into Egypt. At Aboukir, he encountered a Turkish army 11,000 strong, sent thither from Constantinople. On the 25th of July, he attacked and utterly annihilated this force ; and then, leaving his Egyptian legions to the care of General Kleber, embarked in the frigate *Le Miroir*, crossed the Mediterranean, and landed suddenly in France towards the middle of October. Mysterious as this step appeared to be at the time, the event proved that ambition, and ambition

alone, had actuated the victorious general. Anarchy once more reigned in France. A forced loan had robbed the directory of its popularity, and the moment had arrived when only one act of brilliant daring was needed to concentrate the executive power in a single individual. Napoleon felt that this was the genius to conceive and complete so bold a deed. Imitating the example of Cromwell, he repaired to the Hall of Council where the Five Hundred were seated in deliberation. It was the 10th of November, 1799, and he was accompanied by about twenty officers and grenadiers. He reproached the members vehemently with their misrule, refused to swear to the constitution, and declared the directory an incompetent body. A tempest of threats burst out against him on all sides. He retired from the hall in a state of excessive agitation; harangued his soldiers; and then sent Murat with a troop of grenadiers to dissolve the legislative assembly and disperse the members. A consular government was next established, in the formation of which Napoleon was careful to vest in his own hands a large proportion of absolute power. It consisted of a first consul, and two subordinate consuls; a tribuneship; a legislative body; and a parliamentary senate.

During the course of these events, hostilities recommenced in Italy, where the King of Naples, encouraged by the detention of the French army in Egypt, hoped, with the aid of Lord Nelson, to emancipate his dominions. Successful at the commencement of his campaign, he possessed himself of Rome; but was afterwards compelled to take refuge in flight, to embark for Palermo on board an English vessel, and to leave Italy to the entire dominion of the republic. In the same year, Austria and Russia united with England against the growing power of France; but Russia withdrew shortly afterwards from the coalition, and the First Consul took the field in person against the armies of the Emperor Francis. It was now his object to surprise the Austrian forces occupying the line of the Po; and in order to accomplish this, he conceived the gigantic project of crossing the Alps with thirty-five thou-

sand men, and all his munitions of war. On the 17th of May, A.D. 1800, this extraordinary passage was commenced. The gun-carriages were dismounted, and the cannon placed in the hollowed trunks of trees. One hundred men were harnessed to each piece. The cartouches and other necessaries were conveyed by mules. In this order the army crossed by four separate defiles. The first consul accompanied that division which ascended the Great St. Bernard. The courage of the soldiers was only to be exceeded by their constancy, and soon the infantry, cavalry, cannon, and baggage of these four great bodies had surmounted the unparalleled difficulties of the enterprise, and united at the other side of the Mount St. Bernard. On the 14th of June was fought the famous battle of Marengo, in which, after performing prodigies of valour, the legions were on the point of giving way, when the gallantry of General Desaix turned the fortunes of the day. The slaughter on both sides was terrible. The Austrians lost 6000 killed, and 12,000 prisoners; the French lost between 3000 and 4000, and their brave deliverer, General Desaix. Soon after this defeat the Emperor Francis solicited an armistice; but the war recommenced, and Moreau gained a brilliant victory at Hohenlinden. Another armistice followed, and on the 9th of February, 1801, the peace of Luneville was concluded. Naples and Portugal joined soon afterwards in the general pacification, and England made some attempts at negotiation. Egypt, however, was still in the possession of the republic—British India was still liable to attack by the overland passage—and, till some change took place in the affairs of the East, it was evident that no peace could long continue to exist. Some futile and troublesome conventions between the Grand Vizier, General Kleber, and Sir Sydney Smith occupied the chief part of the year 1800; and in the spring-time of 1801 Sir Ralph Abercromby was despatched from England at the head of a formidable army. On the 7th of March he landed, despite the resistance offered by a large body of French troops; and on the 21st fought the battle of Alexandria, in which General Menou, the successor of General Kleber, was

signally defeated. Sir R. Abercromby was mortally wounded, and died on the 28th; being succeeded in his command by Lord Hutchinson. An auxiliary army now arrived from India; Rosetta and Cairo were taken; and Menou was at length forced to make terms, and suffer himself and his troops to be conveyed by the conquerors to the ports of France. Thus ended the triumphs of the French in Egypt. All that they retained of their victories were the manuscripts, the sculptures, and the information acquired by the peaceful men of letters who had accompanied the hosts of Napoleon; and, notwithstanding this immense sacrifice of life and endeavour, Science, after all, remained the only conqueror. The impediments to peace being now removed, the treaty of Amiens was concluded on the 25th of March, 1802; but it soon became evident that the war must recommence. Extensive preparations were made in the ports of France and Holland, and the First Consul continued to regard England with undisguised suspicion. Hostilities were again provoked on the 18th of May, 1803, by the issue of English letters of marque, and the imposition of an embargo on all French vessels in English ports. Napoleon, indignant at this unannounced infringement of the treaty, seized upon all English and Dutch subjects then sojourning in the territories of the republic. In the months of May and June the French armies took possession of Hanover. England was then menaced with an invasion; the troops of Napoleon defended the coast; and camps were established at Bayonne, St. Malo, St. Omer, Bruges, Boulogne, and Calais. Russia and Austria then coalesced with England, and Napoleon, taking advantage of this great crisis, contrived, with admirable diplomacy, to get himself solicited by the senate to exchange the consulship for the imperial crown. To this ambitious step, France, dazzled by his exploits, and confounding the personal glories of the great general with the national glories of the country, was not altogether so averse as might have been anticipated. On the 3rd of May, 1804, a decree was passed by which he was invested with the government of the republic. The title of Emperor was then

made hereditary in his family, and the coronation was rendered peculiarly splendid by the presence of the pope. The ceremony took place in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, on the 2nd of December A.D. 1804. He next passed into Italy, similarly to ratify his royal authority; and on the 26th of May, 1805, was proclaimed King of Italy, and crowned at Milan with the Iron Circle of the Lombards. Genoa was united to the empire a few days afterwards, and the emperor's two brothers, Joseph and Louis, were elevated to the rank of princes. Eighteen of his bravest generals were at the same time created Marshals, and amongst these were Massena, Murat, Soult, Ney, Jourdan, and Davout. In the beginning of the month of October, Napoleon, with his usual rapidity, invaded Germany, at the head of 160,000 men, crossed the Danube, occupied Bavaria, and on the 17th, invested and took possession of Ulm. Wurtemburg, Bavaria, and Baden entered into an alliance with the conqueror, and the two former princes were rewarded with the title of king. Massena at the same time defeated the Archduke Charles of Austria upon Italian ground; and on the 13th of November, the emperor and his army entered Vienna in triumph. From thence he marched into Moravia, and encountered the Russian forces and the remnant of the Austrian battalions on the plains of Austerlitz. Three emperors commanded in person at this memorable action, namely Alexander of Russia, Francis of Austria, and Napoleon of France. They came in sight on the 1st of December, 1805, and before the evening of the 2nd, Napoleon had won one of his most brilliant victories, utterly defeated the allies, taken forty standards, one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, and several thousand prisoners. The Emperor of Austria then sued in person for an accommodation, and on the 26th of the same month, the peace of Presburg was signed by the contending parties. This treaty placed Napoleon in possession of Venice, Dalmatia, and Albania. The titles of the new kings of Wurtemburg and Bavaria were admitted, and that of the emperor himself recognised throughout the Courts of Continental Europe. England now alone remained to resist the dan-

gerous and daily increasing aggrandisement of the French power. Invincible as ever upon the ocean, the British fleets during this year again annihilated the maritime strength of the Empire. On the 7th of February, Admiral Duckworth defeated a French squadron in the West Indies; and on the 21st of October was fought the last and most glorious of the victories of Nelson. Admiral Villeneuve and two Spanish admirals, with the combined fleets of France and Spain, commanded on the one side three and thirty vessels of war. Lord Nelson's force consisted of twenty-seven ships of the line. The action was protracted and sanguinary; nineteen French and Spanish ships were taken or destroyed; the allied admirals were all made prisoners; and Nelson lost his life at the moment of success. The emperor now elevated his brothers to the rank of independent sovereigns. Joseph Buonaparte became King of the Two Sicilies; and Louis Buonaparte, King of Holland. Dalmatia, Istria, and other conquests, were constituted duchies and fiefs, and bestowed upon the great generals and public servants of the Empire. Napoleon then became Protector of the Principalities of the Rhine, and razed the foundations of the ancient Germanic Empire. Francis II., heretofore, formally renounced the title of Emperor of Germany, and on the 6th of August, 1806, assumed that of Emperor of Austria. Russia and Prussia were the next to unite against Napoleon, and again the extraordinary military genius of that great man destroyed the coalition. He defeated the Prussians at Jena (October 14th, 1806); entered Berlin (October 27th); worsted the Russian armies at Eylau (February 8th, 1807); won the battle of Friedland (June 14th); and concluded the peace of Tilsit on the 7th of July. By this treaty, the power of both countries was humbled at his feet. Prussia resigned Saxony, Westphalia, and Prussian Poland; and the conqueror, in his haughty character of king-maker, elevated his third brother, Jerome Buonaparte, to the crown of the new kingdom of Westphalia. He also created the Elector of Saxony, King of Saxony and of Prussian Poland. Amid these triumphs, England continued defiant and unsubdued, and the emperor conceived

a plan by which to accomplish her commercial ruin. Allying in his project the powers of Russia and Denmark, and himself commanding the coasts of Holland and the Low Countries, he closed the ports of nearly all Europe against her trade. This proceeding is known as the Continental Blockade. Portugal was now the only ally that England had left, and the emperor resolved to sweep this last obstacle from his path. An imperial proclamation was issued, announcing that the royal house of Braganza had ceased to reign—Marshal Junot was despatched westward with 28,000 soldiers—the prince-regent of Portugal fled to Brazil, leaving his capital and his fleet to the mercy of the invaders; and on the 29th of November, 1807, the French troops took possession of Lisbon. This acquisition of territory was shortly followed by one still greater. The King of Spain was arbitrarily deprived of his dominions, forced to abdicate his throne in favour of France, and beheld his sceptre pass into the hands of Joseph Buonaparte, July 12th, 1808. Marshal Murat then received the vacant crown of Naples. Spain and Portugal now broke into open insurrection. The foreign sovereigns were repudiated with indignation; aid was implored from England; the peasantry formed themselves into guerilla parties; and an army of 10,000 men, commanded by Sir Arthur Wellesley, was sent out from Great Britain to their assistance. Junot was then forced to evacuate Portugal; Joseph fled from Madrid; and the French were defeated in the decisive battle of Vimiera, August 21st, 1808. Napoleon, however, took the field in person, and in the month of November made himself master of the greater part of the country. Madrid submitted on the 4th of December, and Joseph returned to the Escorial. Boundless in his ambition of conquest, Napoleon was doomed never to enjoy the blessings of security. No sooner had he conquered in one direction than insurrection or invasion was sure to menace him in another. He had humbled all Europe, and therefore all Europe detested him. A spirit of impatience, whether opened or concealed, existed in every one of his tributary courts, and, at this moment of

his supremest power, burst forth suddenly at many points. The spring of the year 1809 beheld a general rising. The Tyrol revolted. The pope opened his ports to the English shipping. Jerome was expelled from Westphalia; and Austria took arms. Napoleon instantly quitted Madrid—crossed the Rhine—gained the victories of Essling and Eckmuhl—took possession of Vienna—conquered at Wagram, and dictated the peace of Vienna, October 14, 1809. Rapid and terrible in his victories, Napoleon was no less rapid and terrible in his vengeance. The Tyrol was given up to devastation; the pope was dethroned; and Louis Buonaparte, who had given encouragement to the English trade, was dispossessed of his newly-acquired kingdom. Holland was then incorporated with France, and the European sovereigns, seeing that it was Napoleon's aim entirely to rule the policy of his brother's kingdoms, began again to concert his overthrow. The year 1810 beheld the utmost eminence of his power. Anxious to cement his alliance with the house of Austria, he divorced the Empress Josephine, whom he had tenderly loved, and who had risen with him from obscurity. He then married Maria Louisa, daughter of the Emperor Francis. The marriage ceremony was performed by proxy, at Vienna, March 11th, 1810; and on the 20th March, 1811, the empress gave birth to a son, who received the title of King of Rome. Perhaps at no period of his career was the emperor so great as at this epoch. That his ambition was limitless and unscrupulous, that he betrayed want of justice, and want of heart, could with difficulty be denied, even by those who most reverence the grandeur of his military fame; but it would be, at the same time, still more difficult to ignore the immense extent of his legislative and administrative labours; his marvellous facility of classification; his vast intelligence; his solicitude for every detail of his sovereign dutics; his encouragement of manufactures; and his liberality towards those who laboured in the cause of science. Only to catalogue his civil achievements would occupy many pages; but a few of the most remarkable may be mentioned. He founded military

and maritime schools ; created the general council for fabrics and manufactures ; granted rewards and prizes to the discoverers of useful improvements, scientific facts, and ingenious mechanical contrivances. He endeavoured to naturalize the growth of cotton in Italy and Corsica. He provisioned his cities and armies. He superintended the sanitary measures. He enriched the national library. He opened roads, dug canals, erected bridges, and otherwise improved the internal condition of every part, home or foreign, of his gigantic empire. The great Alpine roads of the Simplon and the Mont Cenis—the Canal of St. Quentin—the basins of Antwerp and Cherbourg, bear testimony to the colossal dignity of his enterprises ; and to his magnificence the city of Paris is indebted for the triumphal arches of the Etoile and the Carrousel, the bridges of Austerlitz and Jena, the column of the Place Vendôme, the Exchange, the Madeleine, and many others of those beautiful and enduring public edifices which combine to render that metropolis the most attractive of modern Europe. In a word, to quote the language of a French historian, “embracing at once foreign policy, government, finances, and war, he still, amidst his immense labours, found time for all the details.” But this enormous fabric of power, which Napoleon had thought to fortify against every contingency by his late union with the most illustrious of royal houses, was already undermined in every part, threatened from without by foreign foes, and disturbed by long-smouldering hatreds from within. His tributaries were discontented with a royalty which was royal only in name. His allies were allies only because they were conquered and powerless. His suppression of the public press, his newly-created noblesse, his oppressive war-taxes, and his sweeping conscriptions, had fomented a spirit of insurrection among all classes of his subjects. His only faithful adherents were his gigantic armies. Under these circumstances, a sixth and most formidable league was organized against him in the beginning of the year 1812. England, Russia, Spain, and Portugal, united in one common cause, and the

emperor in vain endeavoured to withdraw Russia from the confederation. He then resolved; in pursuance of his usual tactics; to be first in the field, first to declare war, and first to attack. He assembled an army of 600,000 men, and on the 25th of June opened the campaign, crossed the Niemen, and shortly afterwards took possession of Wilna. Smolensk surrendered on the 17th of August, and on the 7th of September the armies met on the plains of Borodino, where, after a sanguinary battle of three days, the Russians were defeated. Napoleon then pushed on for Moscow, with the enemy retreating before him all the way. On the 14th of September the French army scaled the heights of Mount Salut. Yonder lay the innumerable spires, the palaces, churches, and gilded cupolas of this wondrous semi-oriental city, all still, and glittering, and clustered at their feet. With cries of admiration and triumph, they poured down into its streets and squares, and found them all deserted. They entered the churches, where not a priest was seen; and the houses, whence all the inhabitants had fled. It was like an enchanted city, and all their own. Exulting in their plunder and security, they spread hither and thither, and proceeded to pass the night in revelry. But in the midst of their merriment, the city was found to be in flames. The Russians, knowing no other means by which to deprive their foes of winter quarters and provisions, had set fire to their ancient and beautiful capital, which, after four days, sank into a heap of ashes, and left the conquering legions alone with famine and desolation. Thus disappointed, they began a hasty retreat, having to traverse an enemy's country amid all the horrors of a northern winter, and being utterly destitute of any provision, except such as they could find among the deserted villages along their route. During this frightful journey, they were perpetually harassed by flying bodies of Cossacks; were starved; were frozen; and were left to die by the wayside. No less than three hundred thousand splendid soldiers thus perished miserably. Beholding Napoleon's present weakness, all the powers of Europe now combined to

crush him. Sweden entered into the coalition, and Prussia flew to arms. Nevertheless, the emperor was still far from despairing. With the remnant of his Russian army and the help of fresh levies, he again gathered together a formidable force, and, on the 2nd of May, 1813, defeated his enemies at Lutzen. On the 20th and 21st he conquered again at Bautzen. An armistice was then concluded, and the ambassadors met to propose terms of peace. Finding that it was the policy of the allies to curtail his dominions and set limits to his ambition, the emperor rejected their conditions with disdain. Hostilities recommenced, and Austria went over to the side of his enemies, followed by Bavaria and Saxony. All Europe was now in arms against him, and amid a series of defeats at Kulm, at Dennewitz, at Katzbach, and other districts in and about Silesia and Bohemia, the great conqueror found his power rapidly crumbling away.

The battle of Leipsic was fought on the 18th and 19th of October, and proved the crowning blow. In this destructive action, Napoleon lost forty thousand men, sixty-five pieces of cannon, and many standards. He then obtained a fresh levy of three hundred thousand from the senate, and prepared to defend France from the tide of invaders now hemming her in on every frontier. The Russians and Austrians, one hundred and fifty thousand strong, were advancing by way of Switzerland—the Prussians, under Blucher, to the number of one hundred and thirty thousand, by way of the Rhine—the Swedes, amounting to one hundred thousand, by way of the Netherlands. Added to these, Murat turned against his ancient captain—the Dutch recalled the stadholder—and the English, headed by Wellington, were pouring in from Spain towards Bayonne. Now thoroughly brought to bay, the emperor lost neither skill nor military courage. He amazed his enemies by the rapidity of his movements and the fertility of his resources, and still obtained several brilliant successes. Driven back at length, step by step, he saw his conquests wrested from him one after another, and on the 31st of March, 1814, the allied sovereigns made their entry into

Paris. On the 1st of April the senate decreed the throne vacant—on the 6th the Emperor signed his abdication at Fontainebleau—and on the 20th he departed for the isle of Elba, in the Mediterranean, which, with a pension of two millions of francs, was assigned to him as all his future empire. Maria Louisa then returned to Austria with her son, and Louis XVIII. (brother to Louis XVI., and uncle to the Dauphin, who had never been more than nominally king) was restored to the throne of the Bourbons. England now relinquished her foreign acquisitions—the great conquests of Napoleon were resumed by those from whom they had been won—the spoils of art were given back—and France once again comprised very nearly the same territories as on the 1st of January, 1792. Thus, the year 1714 passed to its close, and somehow a rumour of Napoleon's possible return floated through men's minds, and was propagated none knew how. In the beginning of the year 1815, while the ambassadors were yet at Vienna adjusting the claims of Europe, this extraordinary event actually came to pass, and the world, struck with admiration and terror, heard that Napoleon had escaped from Elba, landed in France, and placed himself again at the head of his beloved army. Having landed on the 1st of March, he advanced, with rapidly increasing forces, to Fontainebleau; and on the 20th entered Paris. Louis XVIII. had already fled to the Low Countries; the whole of the civil and military authorities recognised the title of their former ruler; and thus, in twenty days, Napoleon was emperor again. The allies now positively refused to acquiesce in his restoration, or to let him retain France upon the conditions of the treaty of Paris. It was to be war, and only war. All parties made gigantic preparations. The emperor levied three hundred thousand men, and with seventy-five thousand marched into Belgium, was victorious at Ligny, and then, having lost between four and five thousand, turned to confront the English and their allies, then gathered in and around Brussels. On the 18th of June, 1815, they met for the last time. It was upon the field of Waterloo, about ten miles

from the city. The allies were fifty-eight thousand strong, and drawn up in two lines within the narrow space of one mile and a half. The emperor, as usual, commenced the battle by bringing cavalry charges down upon the British lines. These formed into squares and repulsed him, remaining firm in their position from nine in the morning till nearly seven at night. Then the French, who had hitherto been, on the whole, gaining rather than losing, began to waver. Napoleon from his station near La Belle Alliance, and Wellington from his little mound of observation, both looked eagerly for their expected succours. The arrival of Grouchy with his thirty-three thousand would have saved the French. Blucher with his sixty-eight thousand came up and gave the victory to the English. The duke gave the word to charge. Napoleon had no reserve save four battalions of the Old Guard. Even these gave way—a total rout ensued, and the power of the emperor was gone for ever. The carnage was frightful; two hundred pieces of cannon fell into the hands of the allies; and the killed and wounded on the side of the French was double that of their conquerors. Seeing that the day was lost, Napoleon quitted the wreck of his flying army, and hurried to Paris. He found his friends paralysed, and the Chamber of Deputies sternly disposed against him. He abdicated, and they accepted his abdication, formed themselves into a provisional government, and placed Fouché at the head of the administration. All was now over with the brilliant hero of the Great Empire. He surrendered himself to the mercy of England, and was sent, a prisoner, to the far and lonely island of St. Helena, where, after lingering through a few melancholy years, he died on the 5th of May, 1821.

Peace was now restored to Europe, after a series of wars, dethronements, and revolutions, which had lasted during a period of five-and-twenty years. Ferdinand of Spain returned to his kingdom, and Ferdinand of Naples came back from Palermo. The King of Sardinia was reinstated; and Flanders, being united to Holland by consent of Austria, was given to

the Prince of Orange, with the title of King of the Netherlands. France returned to the rule of the Bourbons, and Louis XVIII., at fifty-nine years of age, was placed permanently upon the throne. Weary of strife, exhausted alike in her finances and in her population, France now enjoyed a tranquil security long foreign to her provinces, and slumbered contentedly beneath the inoffensive government of her new sovereign. He was a man of easy temper, unwieldy person, and narrow capabilities. He sincerely desired the welfare of the country, and suffered patiently, during the whole term of his royalty, from protracted physical disease. Undeservedly unpopular at first, he won by degrees upon the respect of the people. Many serious political difficulties occurred to perplex this reign. These difficulties chiefly regarded the royal prerogative, and divided the Chamber of Deputies into three opposing parties—namely, the “Liberal” or popular party; the “Moderate” party, which was that advocated by the king; and the “Royalist” party, which supported the principles of the ancient *régime*, sought to control the liberty of the press, and would have encroached upon the privileges of the subject. In the beginning of the year 1822, a congress of sovereigns met at Verona to discuss the state of Spain, then in open revolt against the weak and perfidious Ferdinand VII. The society called Carbonari, had now spread throughout Europe, and the French Revolution, according to a celebrated prediction of that day, seemed about to make the tour of the world. From the shores of the German Ocean to the bounds of the Adriatic, the cries of liberty, equality, and republicanism, were echoed and repeated. Italy was torn by contending factions. Spain was in a state of rebellion. Prussia and North Germany, disappointed of the constitutions promised to them by their hereditary sovereigns, formed into circles of secret associations; and even in France, revolution-wearied as she was, political troubles were multiplying fast. The king beheld the condition of affairs with serious apprehension, and dreaded lest anarchy in the dominions of his neighbours might reproduce it in his own. His representative urged the con-

gress to interfere in the affairs of Spain, and aid the authority of Ferdinand by force of arms. To this step England was peculiarly averse; and it was chiefly owing to the policy adopted by Lord Wellington that the assembly declined to side with Louis in the employment of active means. Influenced less by the king (who was now almost bowed down by age and infirmities) than by *Monsieur** his brother, the French ministry prepared for war; and in the beginning of the year 1823, a numerous army was collected on the frontiers of the Pyrenees. The command of this force was given to the Duke d'Angoulême, son of *Monsieur*, and nephew to Louis. They crossed the Bidassoa on the 7th of April, and entered Madrid on the 10th of May, when the duke formed a council of regency in favour of King Ferdinand, who was then deposed by the revolutionary party, declared insane, and detained at Cadiz. Thither the French army accordingly proceeded, and (having attacked the batteries of the Isle of Leon, carried Trocadero, and forced Cadiz to open her gates), ended the war by re-establishing Ferdinand upon the throne. Naturally base and tyrannical, this sovereign now proceeded to wreak his vengeance upon those who had endeavoured to subvert his authority. In vain the Duke d'Angoulême strove to interpose between the king and his victims. Execution followed execution; and the French, lamenting the fatal fruits of their victory, retired home again, and entered Paris on the 2nd of November, leaving behind them a part of their numbers for purposes of defence. The successes of the Duke d'Angoulême now evoked a singular instance of that admiration for military glory which bears so large a share in the national disposition of the French. He had fought in the cause of despotism; he had triumphed in the cause of despotism; he had reinstated a despot on the throne of Spain—and yet, so elated were his countrymen with the pride of conquest, that even the republican party beheld with favour the stormers of Trocadero, and loaded the general with praises that would have been lavish if applied to the victor of Austerlitz. A season of greater internal

* A title given to the eldest brothers of the kings of France.

tranquillity followed the close of this war. Public opinion was not in favour of the Court; but so many years had now elapsed since the restoration of the Bourbons, that all apprehensions of a second revolution were fast fading away. At length the infirmities with which he had so long been afflicted threatened the life of the king. On the 12th of September, 1824, he was declared to be in danger, and on the morning of the 16th he breathed his last.

Charles X., lately known by the titles of *Monsieur*, and Count d'Artois, succeeded to his brother's crown, and more than his brother's prejudices. He was not an unamiable man; but he was weak of will, and unfortunately imbued with those notions of prerogative which, once abolished by the revolution, were held in such contempt and hatred by the great mass of his subjects. His first measure, however, was of a nature so obviously just that it obtained some degree of popularity even with the ultra-liberal party. This measure was an act of indemnification granting annuities from the public funds to all the original proprietors of lands confiscated during the revolution—or, when these were no more, to their heirs and next of kin. Two classes were thus gratified; namely, those dispossessed and those in possession. The former received compensation, and the latter found themselves established beyond the chance of expulsion. The next acts of Charles X. were less politic, and less popular. The freedom of the press was attacked—the liberal party was made the object of constant hostilities—the chamber of representatives was dissolved in the hope of strengthening the royalists in the new elections. The elections, however, produced quite a contrary result, and the king found himself with fewer supporters than before. In the year 1827, seventy-six new peers were created for the sole purpose of increasing the influence of the crown in the chamber of peers—a measure which added to the general disaffection. The struggle between Greece and Turkey had now, by its long continuance, attracted the attention of Europe, and determined the leading powers to interfere for the protection and liberation of the

former. The combined fleets of England, France and Russia sailed, accordingly, into the port of Navarino, October 20th, 1827; blew up, captured, and almost annihilated the Turkish navy under Ibrahim Pacha; and confirmed the independence of the nation whose cause they had espoused. In the same year some trifling disputes with Algiers caused a French squadron to be sent out to the coast of Africa, and on the 25th of May, 1830, this squadron was followed by an army of 37,000 men, commanded by the Count de Bourmont. Having encountered an unusual degree of hazy and perplexing weather, the troops landed on the 14th of June, about fifteen miles west of Algiers. The first assault was fixed for the 4th of July, and the French were just about to storm a neighbouring fort, when the Dey sent down a flag of truce and capitulated on conditions favourable to the security of life and property in the town. He then retired to Naples, and Algiers has ever since remained a dependency of France. It was hoped that (as in the former reign) this success might aid in re-establishing the popularity of the crown. Charles, however, placed an effectual bar to all reconciliation between himself and his people by appointing a new and obnoxious mode of election, and by issuing an edict on the 26th of July, which abolished the liberty of the press. The king passed the day in hunting, and although some slight disturbances took place before evening, the ministry congratulated each other on the tranquillity of the capital. On the 27th, the gendarmes seized and summarily destroyed the types and printing presses of several liberal newspapers; and on the 28th the agitation throughout Paris went on increasing. The military were called out to clear the thoroughfares; barricades were thrown up; vast multitudes assembled in the public squares; and in some instances were charged by the cavalry. A considerable amount of firing took place on both sides; but on more than one occasion the military refused to shed the blood of their countrymen. The soldiers of the 5th regiment of the line, every time they were ordered to fire, raised their muskets above the heads of the people and dis-

charged them in the air. The chief scene of this day's struggle was the Hotel de Ville, which, having been occupied by the populace in the early part of the day, was entered and taken possession of by the military towards evening. Much blood was shed in this enterprise, and there can be no question of the extraordinary valour displayed by the people, when opposed at so great a disadvantage to the steady fire of the regular troops. Having posted themselves at the most favourable points, they directed their fire with a coolness, and seized the moments of attack with a skill, which could scarcely have been surpassed by the most practised soldiery. Towards night a comparative tranquillity was re-established, and again the infatuated Court lulled the fears of the king with congratulations and hopes. On the 29th matters put on a still more serious aspect. Six thousand barricades had sprung up in the great thoroughfares, the work of men, women, and children of all conditions. The trees of the Boulevards, planks, pieces of furniture, carts, paving stones, and even in some instances pianofortes, had been piled up, without regard to their value. As an instance of the sincerely just and patriotic feeling by which the people were actuated on this great occasion, may be mentioned the fact that, on the 29th, a body of men carried away a vast quantity of material for barricade purposes from the building-yard of an English architect, and restored them on the following day with the minutest and most scrupulous honesty. Indeed, it has been remarked that in no one case was the revolution of the three days made subservient to purposes of plunder, or to the gratification of any personal enmities. At noon this day, the regiments of the line refused any longer to contend with the Parisians; the youths of the Polytechnic school escaped over the walls of that establishment, and placed themselves at the head of the citizens; General Marmont retired to St. Cloud with such of the guards as remained obedient to command; and Paris was left in undisputed possession of the people. The national guard was then called out, and the veteran Lafayette appointed to the command. Before the close of the day the ministers had

tendered their resignation, the king had revoked his unpopular measures, and the Duke de Mortemart was charged with the formation of a new ministry. But these concessions came too late. The municipal council rejected the overtures of the Court, and informed the duke that "the royal family had ceased to reign." The king now felt that St. Cloud was no longer a safe residence for him. The night of the 29th was spent in preparation, and at earliest dawn he fled to Versailles. During the course of this day, the 30th, the deputies offered the head of the administration and the title of Lieutenant-General of the kingdom to Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, and son of that Philippe Egalité who had voted the death of Louis XVI. in 1793. The duke accepted with alacrity—the troops returned to their duty—immediate order was everywhere restored—Paris resounded with acclamations—the tricolor waved from every public building—the revolution was in three days accomplished; and the reign of Charles X. was irrevocably ended.

From Versailles the Court withdrew to Rambouillet, where, on the 2nd of August, the king and the dauphin both signed an act of abdication in favour of Charles's infant grandson, the Duke of Bordeaux. The Chamber of Deputies declined to admit any such stipulation—the mob poured out of Paris to the number of twenty thousand, and took the road to Rambouillet—the king fled to Cherbourg—and on the 17th of the month the royal family embarked for England. Charles X. did not long survive the loss of his dignity. After residing for some time in Edinburgh, and travelling about the continent as a private gentleman, he died at Goritz in Carniola on the 6th of November, 1836. The Duke d'Angoulême then proclaimed the Duke of Bordeaux, under the title of Henry V., and there are even now in France many families of the retired *noblesse*, and, scattered throughout Europe, many eminent political exiles, who will acknowledge the authority of no other sovereign.

Having declined to recognise the succession proposed by Charles X., the Chamber of Deputies declared the throne

vatant, annulled the peerages created by the late king, confirmed the liberty of religious opinion, and formally summoned to the throne Louis Philippe d'Orleans, with the title of King of the French. On the 9th, that prince repaired in grand procession to the Palais Bourbon, accompanied by his elder sons, the Dukes of Chartres and Nemours. There, in presence of the peers, the deputies, and the diplomatic bodies, he accepted the conditions of the constitution; swore fidelity to the charter; and took his seat upon the daïs. The new sovereign was now fifty-seven years of age, and the father of a numerous family. In his youth he had been educated by the celebrated Madame de Genlis. He had known adversity—he had even known privation. Before he was twenty years of age he had distinguished himself at the battle of Genappes, and since then he had been a refugee in Switzerland, in Norway, in Sweden, and in the United States of America. Coming to England in 1800, he lived for some years in a villa at Twickenham. During these chances and changes of fortune, he had even employed his time and earned his bread by tuition. After the fall of Napoleon he returned to his native country, and had lived there in retirement during the reigns of Louis XVIII. and Charles X. Calculating upon the salutary effects of these his antecedents, the French nation now looked forward to the reign of Louis Philippe as to a period of unexampled justice, popularity, and freedom. Still, however, the three political parties continued to exist, and from two of these the king was destined to experience considerable opposition. The republicans, eager for the revival of the anarchy of 1792, were ready at all times for revolt, were at the bottom of every plot, were the instigators of every outrage, and undermined society with secret associations. On the other hand were the partisans of the ancient *régime*, who sought to restore the late dynasty and pledged allegiance in silence to Henry V. It was not long before the troubles of the new reign began. In the year 1831 a great insurrection broke out at Lyons, and was only subdued by the exertions of Marshal Soult with a body of twenty-six

thousand soldiers. On the 5th of July, 1832, on the occasion of the funeral of General Lamarque, one of Napoleon's old officers, a riot productive of much bloodshed occurred in Paris. Barricades were erected, artillery was brought into the streets, some close fighting ensued, and order was not restored till the afternoon of the following day. In this year the capital was visited by that appalling disease which, under the name of the cholera-morbus, may be termed the Plague of modern times. Appearing suddenly in Paris without having previously shown itself upon any of the frontiers, this fatal malady carried off no less than eighteen thousand souls between the months of March and September. The same year also beheld in La Vendée an unsuccessful attempt to enforce the claims of the Duke de Bordeaux. The movement was immediately suppressed, and the Duchess de Berri, mother to the claimant, was arrested and imprisoned at Blaye. In the mean time Belgium had declared its independence and cast off the yoke of the King of Holland. Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg was elected sovereign of the new state, and the combined fleets of France and England supported his authority, sailed up the Scheldt, besieged the citadel of Antwerp, maintained a blockade of two months, and received the submission of the garrison on the 23rd of January, 1833. The other military operations of this reign were nearly all confined to the Algerian colony, which was constantly disturbed by the attacks of the Moors. Foremost among these defenders of the soil was Abd-el-Kader, chief of the province of Mascara, a warrior of great personal courage and military genius. On the 20th of May, 1834, the government first announced its intention of permanently annexing this territory to the dominions of France, and in the month of December, 1836, Marshal Clausel entered Mascara, and defeated the Arabs in two great battles. On the 13th of October, 1837, General Damremont attacked and carried by assault the city of Constantina, anciently the capital of Numidia. Damremont was killed, and as the victors entered the town, its defender, Achmet Bey, retired from it with twelve thousand men.

From this time the hostilities were frequent and of various fortune. In September, 1845, Abd-el-Kader attacked and cut to pieces a large body of French troops, and in April, 1846, put to death two hundred and ninety-nine out of three hundred of his prisoners. He was, however, reduced to surrender to the Duke d'Aumale on the 22nd of December, 1847, and, being sent captive to France, was imprisoned at the Castle of Amboise, near Tours, on the 2nd of November, 1848. He was, however, released in October, 1852. While these events were going on in Africa, the popularity of the "Citizen King" had been steadily declining. His efforts to abridge the liberty of the press, his frequent prosecutions for libel, his general want of faith, his oppressive taxation, and his lavish expenditure, alienated his subjects more and more with every year of his reign. A conspiracy to dethrone him had been detected as early as the year 1832, and no less than seven direct attempts were made upon his life. Meetings of disaffected persons, called Reform Banquets, were now becoming frequent in Paris and the provincial towns. Secret associations sprang up with renewed vigour. The working-classes adopted as their motto those three words so fatal to sovereigns—"Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." The tenets of Socialism gained ground with the uneducated masses; and even among the tradespeople and middle-classes it became evident that the king and his ministry were thoroughly unpopular. The obnoxious Spanish marriages, by which the king's youngest son, the Duke de Montpensier, received the hand of the Infanta of Spain, and the young Queen Isabella was sacrificed to the dictates of a selfish policy by being united to her cousin, Francisco di Paula, contributed to increase the distrust of the French nation. The people beheld in this step a renewal of those old claims and alliances which had been so frequently the subject of warfare between France and Spain; and a very general suspicion was now entertained respecting the disinterestedness of a king who strengthened his position by family connections, instead of relying upon the love of his people and the justice of his administration. To the popular

demands for reform, liberty of the press, and an ameliorated taxation, neither Louis Philippe nor his ministers paid any regard, and throughout the year 1847 the clubs and associations multiplied tenfold. On the 28th of December a new session opened. Still nothing was done, and the people grew daily more and more discontented. A grand reform banquet was announced in Paris for January 19th, and was prohibited by the police. It was deferred till February 22nd, and again prohibited on the evening of the 21st. The announcement was received with indignation, and the placards torn down by the populace as fast as they were put up. The 22nd was a day of great tumult. Large bodies of workmen and students paraded the thoroughfares, and an attack was made upon the Hotel of Foreign Affairs. The municipal guards and the national guards were, however, called out, and the assailants dispersed. On the morning of the 23rd the second and third legions of the national guard went over to the popular cause—the first minister, M. Guizot, tendered his resignation—barricades were thrown up—the prisons were broken open, and frightful disorders ensued. Several lives were lost during the night, and a desperate struggle seemed to be at hand. At last the king, who had been in a pitiable wavering condition of mind ever since the commencement of the riots, decided to abdicate the throne in favour of his grandson, the Count of Paris. At two o'clock on Thursday, the 24th, the Duchess of Orleans, accompanied by her two sons and the Dukes of Nemours and Montpensier, repaired with this deed to the Chamber of Deputies, in the full expectation that the count would be immediately proclaimed, and order restored. But an armed and angry mob burst into the hall—the royal visitors fled—most of the deputies withdrew—and those who remained fraternized with the intruders. The cause of Louis Philippe was now as irreversibly lost as that of Charles X. Monsieur de Lamartine proposed the establishment of a provisional government, and a council was called at the Hotel de Ville. M. Dupont de l'Eure was then elected head of the administration, and M.

de Lamartine received the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the mean time the royal family had escaped to St. Cloud—the Tuilleries was ransacked by the mob—the railway stations were seized, and the provisional government proposed the formation of a republic. On the 26th the banishment of Louis Philippe and the establishment of the republic was proclaimed from the steps of the Hotel de Ville; and on the 27th the ceremony was repeated at the foot of the column in the Place de la Bastille. By this time the king had reached the coast, and on the 3rd of March he landed at Newhaven, proceeded to Claremont, the seat of his son-in-law, the King of the Belgians, and there lived in strict retirement, till his decease in the year 1850. A national assembly was now elected by universal suffrage, and opened its first session on the 4th of March, 1848. Still the public mind continued in an unsettled state, and disturbances, fomented by the red republicans, kept breaking out during the whole of the month of April. On the 12th of June, Prince Louis Napoleon, son of the ex-king of Holland, was returned for the department of the Seine; and on the 22nd a frightful contest began between the populace, the troops, and the national guard. Paris was declared in a state of siege—cannon and howitzers were brought to bear upon the insurgent quarters of the city—the Archbishop of Paris was killed while exhorting the multitude—General Cavaignac was made dictator—and the city was not relieved from siege till the 20th of the following October. It was then estimated that the nation had sustained a loss of 30,000,000 francs, and that sixteen thousand souls had been killed and wounded. On the 11th of December, Prince Louis Napoleon was elected President of the Republic, having carried the day against General Cavaignac, M. de Lamartine, and M. Ledru Rollin. The tenure of the presidentship was fixed for a period of four years, but before one of these had quite elapsed, it was proposed to extend the term to ten. Another year, however, went by before this point was carried, and on the 1st of January, 1852, the prince-president was formally installed at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and in his residence

at the Tuilleries. His presidency was now a sovereignty in all but name, and the republican party, foreseeing the end of his policy, plotted twice against his life in the course of this year. Both attempts were opportunely discovered, and during the autumn he made a tour through some of the southern departments. This tour was undertaken for the express purpose of conciliating the people, and preparing the public mind for that important change in the government which it is probable this ambitious nobleman had meditated from the first. On the 4th of November, 1852, the prince-president addressed a message to the senate, desiring that the nation should be consulted upon the expediency of restoring the empire of France. The question was then put to the vote throughout the country; the ayes amounted to 7,864,189; and on the 2nd of December, the prince-president was proclaimed emperor by the title of Napoleon III.* On the 30th of January, 1853 he was married to Eugénie de Montijo, Countess of Teba, a Spanish lady of Scottish extraction and ancient family. The ceremony was performed by the Archbishop of Paris, and took place with great splendour at the Cathedral of Notre Dame.

In the midst of that season of tranquillity which now ensued, occurred the first intimations of a dispute which was destined shortly afterwards to disturb the peace of Europe. The Emperor Nicholas of Russia, as head of the Greek Church, claimed dominion over all Greeks born in the territories of the Sultan, and, by way of ensuring the consent of that sovereign, seized upon Moldavia and Wallachia—two provinces which, together, comprise a larger extent of country than England and Wales, and contain a population of 1,450,000 souls. The sultan replied by a spirited defiance, and after some brilliant actions, Omer Pacha, the Turkish general, succeeded in expelling the Russian troops from the Danubian Principalities. France and England now united to oppose the aggressions

* Napoleon, called the second, was that son born to Napoleon I. and Maria Louisa, on the 20th of March, 1811. He never reigned, and on the abdication of his father, was created Duke of Reichstadt, in Austria. He died on the 22nd of July, 1832.

of Nicholas. War was declared towards the end of March, 1854, and on the 22nd, the combined fleets, under Admirals Hamelin and Dundas, bombarded Odessa. The fortifications of this important port were destroyed; thirteen ships laden with munitions of war were captured; two powder magazines exploded in the town; and the allies drew off from this victory with a loss of only five men. An invasion of the Crimea was next undertaken, and on the 14th of September, the allies landed near Eupatoria. On the 20th was fought the great battle of the Alma.

The allies numbered about 50,000 men, and the Russians, who were 54,000 strong, were drawn up among the batteries and entrenchments along the steep banks of the river. The French led the first attack, and, being followed up by the English troops, drove the enemy from their admirable position, pursued them down the hill, and, after a contest of three hours, achieved one of the noblest victories in the annals of warfare. The allies lost 609 men killed, and 2699 were wounded. The Russian loss was roughly estimated at 1762 killed, and 2720 wounded; but it is conjectured that their disasters were even more serious. On the 23rd the allies marched southwards, and on Monday, the 25th, arrived before the fishing port of Balaklava, which, after a faint show of resistance, surrendered unconditionally. The prisoners were then forwarded to Constantinople, and the army took up its quarters in the deserted lanes and hovels of the town. From this time the allies were actively employed in throwing up earthworks and digging trenches before Sebastopol. We mounted guns, and every day crept nearer and nearer to the enemy. Continual efforts were made by the Russians to harass the working parties—to surprise them in their lines at night—to pour out suddenly by day—and to bombard them fiercely from innumerable forts; but still they kept building up their batteries, and in time came close enough to fire upon the enemy in return. On the 17th of October our guns opened on Sebastopol, and the siege began. On the 25th was fought the battle of Balaklava, an action in which the

English, being assisted by only a limited body of French troops under General Bosquet, sustained all the dangers and achieved all the glory. The battle of Inkerman next followed on the 5th of November, and was begun by a surprise on the part of the Russians, who attacked the English camp under cover of a misty morning, and would have annihilated the flower of our army but for the arrival of Generals Bosquet and Canrobert with 6000 of their best troops. The fortune of the day was immediately turned. French and English together charged furiously upon the enemy—the French batteries opened an irresistible fire, and the battle of Inkerman, after a struggle of twelve hours, was triumphantly won. 6000 French and 8000 English had on this occasion defeated 50,000 Russians. On the 2nd of March, 1855, died Nicholas, Emperor of all the Russias. This event, however, made no change in the affairs of the contest, which his son and successor pledged himself to continue. Reinforcements were now forwarded to the seat of war; an electric telegraph was established at the Crimea; a railway was laid down between Balaklava and the camps; and by the month of May, 150,000 of the best soldiers in the world were again bombarding Sebastopol. On the 18th of June, after many sorties and assaults, the French and English made an unsuccessful attack upon the Malakoff and Redan towers, and lost five hundred men in the attempt; and on the 16th of August the Russian forces attacked the English and Sardinian camps in the valley of the Tchernaya. Repulsed and literally hurled down the hill by an overwhelming charge of French cavalry, they rushed back in confusion, and, amid the destructive fire of the Sardinian batteries, retreated across the river with a loss of three thousand dead, and four hundred prisoners. On Wednesday, September 5th, the final bombardment of Sebastopol began upon a gigantic scale, and on Thursday the city was observed to be on fire in many places. On Friday a powder magazine blew up within the walls, and it was calculated that one thousand per diem were killed or disabled by our balls and shells. On Saturday the 8th, the allied armies combined in a

monster assault, which, at the very commencement, was signalized by the gallantry with which the French took possession of the Malakoff bastion and planted the tricolor in view of Sebastopol. They then attacked the central bastion and the Little Redan, and were in both instances repulsed, while the English made an unsuccessful attempt upon the Redan. General Pelissier was now secure in his possession of the Malakoff, and the Russian general, seeing that all was lost, resolved to evacuate the town. Favoured by the darkness, he withdrew his troops over the river by means of a bridge of rafts, and the inhabitants were removed in boats and steamers; the whole retreat being guarded by General Schepeloff, who prevented the French from advancing into the town. When all were gone, the bridge was destroyed, and the town fired, in order that nothing might remain to the conquerors, save such ruin, and flame, and desolation as greeted Napoleon and his army in the streets of Moscow. One by one, forts, batteries, and vessels in harbour blew up with loud explosions or sent forth fountains of fire. Next morning the allies entered the town. Churches and palaces yet smoking, blackened, and deserted, were visited with eager curiosity; and after the expiration of a few more days, the armies took up their quarters within the walls. This great siege had occupied nearly twelve months—had given rise to four bombardments and three great battles—had, in the last attack, occasioned a loss of 2700 French and English soldiers—and had cost on all sides (French, English, Sardinian, and Russian) something like one hundred thousand human lives.

Having achieved this great victory, the allies next proceeded to secure the good offices of the King of Sweden. A treaty by which England and France pledged themselves to the defence of Sweden and Norway, and received in return the co-operation of King Oscar against the encroachments of Russia, was concluded on the 21st of November. General Canrobert, to whose diplomatic talents this mission was judiciously confided, was not, however, so successful with the sovereign of Denmark, who continued to persevere in

the strict neutrality maintained by him throughout the war. Thoroughly humbled by the fall of Sebastopol, and alarmed by a treaty that linked against her the fleets and armies of three powerful nations, Russia was now glad to listen to those terms of peace by which Austria, as her friend and mediator, sought to put an end to the troubles of Europe. On the 25th of February, 1856, the representatives of France, England, Turkey, Sardinia, Austria, and Russia assembled in Paris to discuss this important question; and on the 30th of March a treaty, in which Austria and Russia obtained an unfair advantage and the claims of Turkey were too lightly passed over, was finally concluded. Peace is thus once more established throughout Europe. Our foreign legions are disbanded. Our brave sailors are paid off. Our armies are withdrawn from the Crimea. The seas no longer bear men and arms to the seat of war, and the tents that whitened the valley of Varna have long since been struck. Still there are prophecies of evil amid the diplomatic circles of France and England, and voices from the voluminous columns of the press which utter presages of war yet to come, and pronounce this present amity to be little more than an armed neutrality. That these warnings may prove to be without foundation must be the earnest prayer of all who desire the welfare of their country and their kind; but, should treachery or rapacity again force us to the field, we shall hope to enter it with a becoming submission to the will of Providence—with an enlarged experience—with a just cause—and, above all, with that high courage which has descended to the conquerors of Sebastopol from their ancestors who fought of old under Alfred and Charlemagne.

THE END.

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